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JOSHUA: HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

BY

REV. WILLIAM J. DEANE, M.A.
RECTOR OF ASHEN, ESSEX.

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PREFACE.

THE materials for the Life of Joshua are found in the Book which bears his name, in portions of the Pentateuch, and some scattered notices in the rest of Scripture and the Apocrypha. Josephus and Rabbinical traditions add little of any value, and the Samaritan Book of Joshua is a compilation of the thirteenth century altogether untrustworthy and useless for historical purposes. The "Records of the Past" afford a curious commentary on our Book in the account of the travels of an Egyptian officer through Palestine shortly before the Jewish invasion. A large number of the places visited by him are easily identified, and the notices of the towns and the state of the country are full of interest and instruction.

I have not thought it necessary, nor have I space, to burden my pages with controversial matter. The careful reader, however, will gather that I have endeavoured virtually to reply to theoretical fancies by the statement of assured facts. When the critics are agreed among themselves as to the age, date, and distribution of the several parts of what they call the Hexateuch, it will be time to see how far we have to modify old opinions. A comparative analysis of its treatment by four great German critics (not, however, including Dillmann's last essay, 1886) may be seen in Ladd's "Doctrine of Sacred Scripture," i. 517 ff. This is most instructive and perplexing.

To the many commentaries on Joshua I owe much assistance; the most useful, perhaps, are those of Dillmann, in "Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch" (1886), and Dr. Maclear in

“The Cambridge Bible for Schools.” As it is impossible to understand or appreciate this Book without an accurate knowledge of geographical details, I have endeavoured to embody in my account the latest identifications of Biblical sites, and have been fain to add reality to my descriptions by inserting the actual words of recent travellers. To increase the utility of my little work, and to make it in some sort a handbook of Scriptural topography, I have appended a geographical index.

Oct., 1889.

W. J. D.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLIER YEARS.

First appearance of Joshua in history ; his name and parentage—The minister of Moses—Jealousy for his master's honour—Sent as one of the twelve spies ; his report—Lessons in the wilderness—Appointed successor of Moses—Death of Moses—Phoenicians, Hittites, and Canaanites ; their religion and moral degradation—Different views concerning the settlement of Israel in Palestine—The destruction of the Canaanites considered ; the Israelites' part therein—Joshua encouraged.

THERE is something strange and unexpected in the first appearance of the name of Joshua in the pages of Scripture. It comes suddenly, heralded by no announcement, explained by no previous allusion. The Amalekites have withstood Israel at its entrance into the peninsula of Sinai, and their opposition must be defeated at all hazards. Then with no preliminary remark the narrator continues : “And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek.”¹ Conscious of his own impaired activity, and recognizing the military skill of Joshua, Moses does not hesitate to give him the command at this crisis. The choice was proved to be good. Though the enemy was brave and determined, and the battle was obstinately contested till the close of day, the Israelites under their new leader were thoroughly successful, the Amalekites suffered a very severe defeat, and, taught by this lesson, refrained from molesting the pilgrims during the rest of their long wanderings. The account of this victory Moses was directed to record in the annals of the people, and especially to impress upon the mind of Joshua the foreordained doom of the

¹ Exod. xvii. 9.

Amalekites—a premonition of the part which he would have to play in the conquest and subjugation of this and kindred nations.*

Joshua at this time was no young, untried man; he must have been forty years old or more,² and had gone through all the hardships of the life and bondage in Egypt, and had doubtless on many occasions proved his ability and endeared himself to Moses. His name was originally Hosea, but was changed by Moses to Jehoshua,³ shortened later into Joshua and Jeshua. It is written Oshea, Hoshea, and Hosea, and in the Septuagint appears as Jesus, as it does in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. iv. 8), and in Acts (chap. vii. 45). The original word means "deliverance," or "salvation"; to this was added the syllable denoting the sacred name Jah or Jehovah, which would give to the word the signification, "the Lord's salvation," or "the Lord is salvation," or, as Pearson⁴ takes it, "God the Saviour." It was a great name, the greatest of all names, a fit prelude to notable deeds, an appellation which would incite its bearer to act worthily of so august a reference. Joshua was the son of Nun, a member of the tribe of Ephraim, and, according to the Chronicler,⁵ twelfth in descent from the Patriarch Joseph. The name of his mother is unknown. Among his ancestors his grandfather Elishama is mentioned as being the chief of Ephraim and bearing the standard of the tribe. Born in the land of Goshen, his birth would synchronize with Moses' flight into Midian, when the treatment of the Israelites was most harsh and their condition growing daily more insupportable. This, according to the common chronology, was about 1531 B.C.; but if, as late discoveries lead us to believe, the Exodus took place not B.C. 1491, but B.C. 1320,⁶ the year of Joshua's birth would be B.C. 1360, his death occurring in his 110th year, B.C. 1250. What was his experience during his early life in Egypt we know not; the idolatry of the inhabitants, with

* "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua."

² Josephus, "Ant." v. 1. 29, makes him forty-five at the time of the Exodus. See below, chap. viii. ³ Numb. xiii. 8, 16; Deut. xxxii. 44.

⁴ "On the Creed," Art. ii. ⁵ 1 Chron. viii. 23; Numb. ii. 18; x. 22.

⁶ Two recent articles in "The Theological Monthly" (March and July, 1889) fix the Exodus at B.C. 1438. But the writer takes no account of the discoveries at Tel-el-Maskhutah.

its degradation and immorality, must have been daily before his eyes ; he must have seen the attraction which this sensuous worship exercised upon his countrymen ; doubtless he shared in the rigour with which his brethren were treated, and by serving learned to command ; doubtless, too, he had hailed with joy the judgments of God which preceded the uprising of the people, and aided in marshalling the unwieldy mass for its hurried flight. As a chief of the important tribe of Ephraim, and as one already well known for his skill in organization, and one thoroughly trusted by the people, to him Moses turned as the leader best fitted to select and arrange the combatants for their first and most important struggle. From this time he is associated with the great prophet in the closest relation, and is called his minister or servant, attending him on the most solemn occasions. Thus when Moses, Aaron with his sons, and the seventy elders, went some way up the awful mountain Sinai to eat the sacrificial meal which was the seal of the newly made covenant, Joshua accompanied Moses as his servant, and was left by him on the mount while he himself advanced into the cloud to hold mysterious communion with the Lord. And when after the forty days' revelation was consummated, and Moses, informed of the people's lapse into idolatry, was returning sadly to his common life and cares, Joshua was the first to meet him, and call his attention to the commotion and shouting in the camp below. Ignorant of the real cause, the warrior can think of but one origin for the unwonted tumult : "There is a noise of war in the camp," he says. It is characteristic of the thought of one whose mind is set on military matters and the defence of a position in a hostile country to attribute such excitement to the presence of enemies and the strife of combatants. In the severe punishment of the idolaters Joshua took no part ; that was left to the children of Levi ; but thenceforward he adhered more closely than ever to the side of Moses, so that it is said that he departed not out of Moses' tent ;¹ he ministered to his great master when present,

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 21. The A.V. has : "the tabernacle" ; but the tabernacle proper was not yet erected ; and this "tent of meeting" was most probably Moses' own temporary habitation used for this special purpose. In the above passage Joshua is called "a young man" (*naar*), but the term is often used vaguely of pupilage, or as expressive of vigour and activity, without special reference to actual age.

and during the frequent absence of the latter he guarded the sacred residence and the various holy relics deposited therein. The next occasion on which his name appears is on the appointment of the seventy elders to assist Moses in the administration of his onerous charge. Here he comes forth as jealous of his master's honour. Among those thus duly appointed, two, Eldad and Medad, had not gone with the others to the tent of meeting to receive their public inauguration ; yet when these others had their office accredited by receiving the power of "prophesying," *i.e.*, uttering the praises of God and declaring His will, the same sign was granted to the absentees, "and they prophesied in the camp." Joshua, conceiving that they were acting independently and setting up a rival authority, urged Moses to forbid them, but was answered by that meek saint : "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit upon them."¹

For many months now we lose sight of Joshua, nor is it till the host was approaching the borders of the Promised Land, in the second year after the Exodus, that his name again appears in the sacred record. On this occasion he represents his own tribe as one of the twelve spies sent into Canaan to prepare the way for the contemplated invasion by making careful observation of the people, the country with its soil and cultivation, the strength and fortification of the cities, and all other points the knowledge of which might be a guide to future proceedings. As these messengers, starting from the southern wilderness, penetrated to the plain of Cœle Syria, in the far north, between Lebanon and Antilebanon, Joshua had a good opportunity of gaining acquaintance not only with the nature of the population, but also with the physical features of the country, which was of great assistance to him in subsequent operations. It was at this time, perhaps, that Moses added the honourable syllable to Joshua's name, as if he would denote that this leader was specially under the protection of God ("God-help"), and already destined for great things. Similarly we have new names bestowed on Abram and Jacob, with a deep significance, the former receiving the name Abraham ("Father of a multitude"), the latter that of Israel ("God fighteth"). Distinguished for bravery and resolution, Joshua at this crisis showed himself possessed of a far more uncommon attribute, moral courage.

¹ Numb. xi. 25 ff. Comp. Mark ix. 38.

In the face of the unfavourable report of their companions¹ and the general opposition of the disheartened people, Joshua and Caleb alone expressed their belief in the possibility of success, and urged the invasion of the land which was to be their inheritance. Strong in faith and trusting in Divine protection, these two men were not appalled by the thought of the task that lay before them ; fortified cities, gigantic foes, insecure tenure, had no terrors for them ; the Lord had promised to give the country to His people, and He would prosper their proceedings. To the warrior Joshua it seemed a feasible enterprise. It had been the dream of his life for many a month ; he could not bear to think of disappointment now ; a resolute purpose, a vigorous blow, a brief campaign, and the result could not be doubted. He and his friend were of one mind in the matter. "The land, which we passed through to spy it out," they said, "is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it unto us. Only rebel not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land ; for they are bread for us ; their defence is removed from over them, and the Lord is with us ; fear them not." These were brave, faithful words ; but they fell on deaf ears. These two righteous men had their reward in being spared when the other spies died by the heaven-sent plague. In the subsequent ill-advised attack on the Amalekites and Canaanites with its disastrous issue Joshua took no part ; he remained with Moses and the ark in the camp. And now we lose sight of him for eight-and-thirty years, the term of the penal wanderings in the wilderness. But this weary time must have taught him much. One lesson must have forcibly impressed him ; the terrible punishment of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram could not have been witnessed unmoved ; nor could he help gathering therefrom the great truth of the sanctity of the priesthood and the sin of unhallowed intrusion into the sacerdotal office. Then, again, what a lesson of entire submission to the will of God did he learn from the one lapse of his master Moses, so sternly punished ! He had seen Miriam die ; he had seen Aaron buried in Mount Hor ; he had

¹ "A land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof" (Numb. xiii. 32). This expression is explained as denoting that the country was malarious and pestilential, or so exposed to attack that its occupants must be always on the watch.

seen Israel warring, tempted, fallen, recovered. But his part in these momentous matters is not recorded. It is at the close of the life of Moses that he next comes before us, and this at the most important point of his career. History does not mention who was the leader that had the conduct of the three wars which gave Israel possession of Eastern Palestine, adding a final glory to the fame of the great lawgiver ;^{*} but it is most probable that they were waged and brought to a successful issue under the leadership of Joshua, the experienced commander, and the tried friend of his eminent master. When Moses was warned that his end was approaching, knowing that he himself was debarred from entering the promised land, he desired God to give the people a competent leader who would rightly conduct this momentous undertaking, "that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." No thought of obtaining the post for either of his sons, Gershom and Eliezer, entered his mind. They had shown no aptitude for such an office ; and to place the enterprise in incompetent hands would ensure failure, and restrain the favour of the Lord without which success was impossible. Neither were his nephews or grand-nephews eligible. Phinehas, indeed, was a man of vast energy and of some military skill, but his ecclesiastical duties were numerous and absorbing ; they would certainly interfere with his leadership, and one of the two must perforce be neglected. But Moses was spared the selection ; he had committed the choice to God, and the matter was decided for him. He was directed to take Joshua, "a man in whom is the Spirit," and solemnly dedicate him as his successor, by laying his hand upon him, and at once giving him a certain authority and dignity. The chosen one was in every relation acceptable ; he was joined to Moses by the closest ties of love and respect ; he had given constant proof of courage and ability, and the leadership could not be committed to more competent hands. Yet great and highly regarded as he was, in one particular he came far behind his predecessor. This vice-leader was distinguished from Moses by the mode of communication with God. Both, indeed, were theocratic chiefs ; both were directed by Divine monitions ; but while Moses had enjoyed direct intercourse with God, the Lord "speaking unto

* See Prof. Rawlinson, "Moses: his Life and Times," pp. 182 ff.

him face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,"¹ Joshua was to seek counsel through the High Priest, by the use of the Urim and Thummim. The designation of Joshua was made some little time before Moses' death ; the final transference of succession followed. A solemn assembly of all Israel was summoned, and Moses publicly handed over to Joshua the leadership which for forty years he himself had exercised. He knew the arduous nature of the work that had to be accomplished, and his constant injunction to his successor is, " Be strong and of a good courage" : there is, indeed, necessity for great fortitude, but there is a happy assurance of support, for the Lord will go with him and never fail him, therefore he confidently repeats : " Fear not, neither be dismayed." Jewish tradition² narrates how the dying prophet commits to Joshua not only the office of leader, but also certain documents containing the laws of the community, which he is to keep safely stored in earthenware receptacles till a place is found on which the Lord shall set His name. Moses then gives a prophetic sketch of Jewish history down to the time of the Herods. Appalled at the greatness of the task before him, Joshua rends his clothes and falls at the feet of Moses, weeping to think that he in his incompetence is left to take the place of this mighty leader, and that there will be no one to intercede for the people, if they fall into sin, no one to inspire terror into the mind of their enemies. But Moses raises him from the ground and places him on the seat by his side ; comforts him with the assurance that God has foreseen and provided for all these things from the beginning ; and adds that he himself has been chosen by the Lord for this post not on account of his virtue or his weakness, but through the Divine compassion. According to the sacred historian³ the delegation was finally confirmed by God Himself in the Tabernacle, whither the two chiefs were summoned. Here the Lord gave Joshua a charge, appearing in the pillar of cloud, and saying to him, " Be strong and of a good courage : for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them ; and I will be with thee." Such a declaration, so wonderfully bestowed, drove aside all diffidence and distrust, and filled him with the courage of a hero, and the calm consciousness of

¹ Exod. xxxiv. 11 ; Deut. xxxi. 7, 8.

² See "Assumptio Moyseos" in Fritzsche's "Libri Apocryphi V.T." There are also editions by Volkmar and others. ³ Deut. xxxi. 14, 23.

power that insured success. Fire kindles fire ; the intrepidity of the commander would augment the fortitude of the troops, and the unwarlike Israelites, following such guidance and upheld by such hopes, might achieve momentous results, and attain the object of their ambition.

It was not permitted to Joshua to see the actual death of his master. He and Eleazar the priest had accompanied the dying saint on his pilgrimage to Pisgah ; but when the end came they saw not. Alone, removed from all human ken, Moses yielded up his spirit. Where he died, and where his sacred body rests, no mortal man knoweth. The sacred record says vaguely, "He was buried in the valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor." This may well have been the weird gorge of Callirhoe (Zerka M'ain), on the ridge immediately north of which it is probable Beth-peor stood, where a narrow spur runs out to Minyeh, and where a prehistoric circle of stones exists to this day.¹

The work which Moses was not allowed to accomplish, Joshua had now to undertake and carry to completion. This task was an arduous one. He had not to take possession of and colonize an uninhabited country ; he had not to expel or subdue mere savages, of inferior race and culture ; on the contrary, the people whom he was about to displace were in many respects more civilized and advanced than the Hebrews, and were vastly their superiors in the use of arms and in all matters pertaining to military experience. Canaan, the country which he proposed to conquer, was already, and had for centuries been, inhabited by Phoenicians, the greatest commercial nation of antiquity, to whom Europe owes her letters, who in their restless energy penetrated beyond the bounds of the Mediterranean Sea, and carried off stores of minerals from the shores of Britain. While the Israelites were sojourning in Egypt, Phoenicia had reached the height of its prosperity. In close union with the Hittites it may be said to have become a power in the world, the rival of Assyria and Egypt. The Hittites, as we have lately discovered, were a people of wide possessions, of high culture, and of vast importance in human history. From Kadesh on the Orontes, far north of Palestine, to Carchemish on the Euphrates in the distant East, their empire extended ; the promised land was included in their

¹ Conder, "Heth and Moab," 141 f.

territories, the petty kings of this country owing allegiance to them ; and it was not to be supposed that they and their dependants would be displaced without a severe struggle. If they are mentioned only as one of the seven nations which occupied the country at this time, we have evidence that they were the most prominent tribe in Palestine, being an offshoot of the great nation whose name they bore. In the time of Abraham they dwelt in the neighbourhood of Hebron, and later they appear as mingled with the Amorites, and inhabiting the mountains of Ephraim and Judæa. The other nations which had their home in this territory were the following, as enumerated by Joshua to his assembled army :¹ the Canaanites, or Lowlanders who dwelt on the sea-coast and the Jordan valley ; the Hivites, a peaceful tribe who inhabited Shechem and its vicinity, and had a settlement also in Anti-Libanus ; the Perizites, agriculturists dwelling in the unwalled villages of Central and Southern Palestine ; the Gergashites, who are supposed to have taken their name from Gergesa or Gerasa on Lake Gennesareth, and appear to have been a clan of small importance ; the Amorites, or mountaineers, the most powerful of the Canaanite peoples, who, in close connection with the Hittites, had established themselves both east and west of the Jordan in various localities ; the Jebusites, who held the central highlands round their impregnable capital, Jerusalem, and were of Hittite or Amorite race.

The religious and moral condition of these nations was utterly corrupt. Luxury and commercial prosperity had produced a moral depravity which cried aloud for punishment and repression. If, as is probable, the religions of Greece and Rome owed their origin to Phœnician elements, we see them at their best in the case of the former, and in their most degraded shape in the country from which they sprung. The Phœnician religion was a deification of the forces of nature, and led naturally to the grossest licentiousness practised under the guise of worship. The chief god was Baal, who under various names was adored as the sun, and the prevalence of whose worship is seen in the numerous appellations of places and persons which contain the word. To him as consort was united Ashtaroth or Astarte, who seems to have combined the characteristics of the classic Artemis and Aphrodite, and to have been taken

¹ Josh. iii. 10. Comp. Deut. vii. 1.

as representative of the reproductive process and the fecundity of nature. Of the gross impurity practised in her worship it becomes us not to speak. But the general nature of the religion as it appears in our sacred books is such as we gather it to have been from other sources, cruel, bloodthirsty, licentious. When a people has come to believe that the deities whom it worships are best propitiated by human sacrifices, by ruthless severing of nearest ties, by debauchery, and unspeakable degradation, it is time for judgment to begin.

According to neologian criticism the settlement of Israel in the land of Canaan took place at various times, and under varying conditions. Some tribes settled peaceably among the Canaanites ; others forced their way sword in hand. The notion that there were ever twelve tribes existing at the same time is chimerical, and has been foisted into the history for genealogical purposes. The immigration was dictated by the customary restlessness of a nomadic people, and was only partially successful ; but the new-comers gradually took the lead, their religion and moral force being superior to those of the nations whom they dispossessed.* The Bible gives a very different representation of the transaction ; it exhibits the Israelites as entering upon a long promised inheritance, and as executing the wrath of God upon a horde of offenders who were unfit to live. Many centuries ago the Land of Canaan had been promised to Abraham and his posterity. The earth is the Lord's, and He giveth possession to whomsoever He pleaseth ; and He had distinctly and often declared that the people whom He had chosen should in due time immigrate hither and become a mighty nation in whom all the world should be blessed. This hope had been continually set before the patriarchs ; it had animated their faith, inspired them with patience, and encouraged them under pressure of adverse circumstances. It was this hope that led the dying Jacob to engage his sons to bury his body in the cave of Machpelah ; it was this hope that constrained Joseph to direct that when God visited His people to deliver them out of Egypt, they should carry his bones with them to their new home. And now the time was come for them to enter upon their

* These are the views of Wellhausen and Stade. A summary of them is given by the Rev. A. W. Oxford in his "Introduction to the History of Ancient Israel." (London, 1887.)

inheritance, and settle whither the Providence of God was leading them. Whatever right the Canaanites had to the land by force of long possession was forfeited by their wickedness, and it was made over to the Hebrews to be the centre of pure religion and the earthly scene of the kingdom of God.

The morality of this dispossession and wholesale destruction of the Canaanites has often been questioned. Grounded here-upon objections against God's justice and mercifulness were made in primitive times, and have been repeated in various forms down to this present day. But they admit of a satisfactory answer, which can be shortly stated. Granted that the moral condition of these nations was so utterly corrupt that their eradication was a necessary result of God's government of the world by a system of rewards and punishments, and we are at once constrained to think more of the result than of the agents by which the result was obtained. Whether the intended destruction was effected by war, or famine, or pestilence, or earthquake, the particular visitation was God's instrument, and was guided in its ravages by His Providence. The Israelites were specially designated, and felt themselves to be, agents in the Lord's hands to execute His purpose of vengeance upon outrageous sinners. Their conscience was quite clear in the matter. In an age when human life was little regarded, the annihilation of a people aroused no feeling of abhorrence, was not felt to be cruel and monstrous, and no squeamish pity interfered to check the course of the judicial punishment. The destruction is in no degree more ruthless and unreasonable because inflicted by human agents. Men are carried off by all manners of death, by sickness, by accident, by old age, and we think these inflictions natural, and never complain of their injustice; why should death at the hands of man be placed in a different category? If the Canaanites had been gradually obliterated by famine or pestilence, men would not have arraigned God's Providence, though their sufferings and misery would have been enhanced tenfold; yet surely, if they had to be executed, the edge of the sword, as it was the speediest, so it was the most merciful mode of death. We must also remember that it was the common practice of the time and country to put to death the whole population of a conquered town or district. The Assyrian monuments constantly record the general slaughter that ensued on the

capture of a city. Such a boast may be seen on the celebrated Moabite Stone, wherein King Mesha felicitates himself in having killed all the men of Ataroth, in the tribe of Gad. The sentiment which spares a resisting enemy was wholly foreign to the minds of combatants in those days, and would have been regarded as culpable weakness or incomprehensible folly.

It must be observed also that the destruction of the Canaanites was by no means so complete as the terms used seem to imply. From apathy, or cowardice, the Israelites failed signally in carrying out the strict injunctions of the Law, and left large districts unconquered, or lived on peaceful terms with the original inhabitants. And many of these latter avoided extermination by flying from the country, or into districts as yet unsubdued, or took refuge in cities on the sea-board. An inscription (which may possibly be authentic) is known to have been seen at Tangiers, in Africa, which stated that the inhabitants were the descendants of fugitives who were driven from their home by "Joshua, the son of Nun, the plunderer."¹

That the innocent should be involved in the destruction of the guilty, is a matter of every-day experience. National calamities, convulsions of nature, material scourges, spare neither age nor sex, are utterly pitiless in operation. We patiently acquiesce in such indiscriminate dealing because we have faith in God's justice, and know that this present life is only one little scene in an infinite space where all inequalities shall be righted, and all incongruities shall be remedied. If the degrading idolatry, the atrocious cruelty, the unnatural crimes, of these Canaanites cried aloud for punishment, what good result would be attained by sparing any, even innocent children? Would these grow up better than their parents? Would they rise superior to their surroundings? God's mercy had waited long for the repentance of these nations. They had had high examples of piety in such men as Melchizedek and the holy patriarchs who sojourned among them; ever before their eyes lay the ruins on the fatal Plain of the Salt Sea, that told of God's vengeance on their favourite sins. Example and warning were given in vain. The wonders which had led the Israelites out of Egypt, the Providence

¹ Rawlinson, "Bampton Lectures," i. 72.

which had watched over them for forty years and had now brought them once more to the borders of Palestine, filled the heathen with vague apprehension, but produced no tokens of repentance and correction of error. There was no hope of improvement ; the right to the land, whatever it was, was originally the free gift of God, and that was now revoked ; He who had given reclaimed the gift, and put into the hands of the Israelites the execution of His fiat. And was it not well for these to be the agents in carrying out this sentence ? How better could they have been taught God's abhorrence of idolatry and the evil practices which it occasioned ? When they found themselves constrained to put to death the whole inhabitants of city after city, they could not but see that these victims were abominable in God's sight, and that wickedness such as theirs was certain to meet with severest punishment. They were taught in the most practical manner the danger of evil communication ; they were taught that there could be no truce between them and the heathens who dwelt around them, that isolation was their duty and their safety. We see how necessary was this lesson by the proneness of the Israelites to imitate the practices of other peoples with whom they came in contact. And though they never thoroughly carried out the Divine intention, and shrunk from the complete execution of the commands, and made compromises, and were but half-hearted in their undertaking, yet even this partial accomplishment of the stern sentence had an enduring and widely extended effect. The heathen did not grow up intermingled with the people of God ; the spark of true religion was not smothered by the overpowering blight of Paganism ; and the knowledge of God and His pure worship were retained and kept alive till Messiah Himself appeared. Thus these petty struggles in a remote corner of the earth have a world-wide importance, did a work which was providentially ordered to help forward the era of full salvation, preluded the revelation of Bethlehem and the triumph of Calvary. To the Hebrews alone was confided the pure idea of the Deity ; had they been overborne or absorbed by the heathen peoples around them, polytheistic abominations would have been vastly encouraged, and the history of humanity would have been terribly different.

With a view of softening the apparent severity of the treatment of the Canaanites, Rabbinical writers have asserted that

Joshua, before invading the land, made certain offers to the inhabitants in accordance with the instructions in Deut. x. 14, proposing that those who did not wish to fight should either leave the country or become tributary. But there is no trace of any such negotiations in our history, and the course of action prescribed in Deuteronomy applied only to foreign enemies, and might not be employed in dealing with Canaanites whose utter destruction was a religious obligation.

The difficulties of the great work which fell into his hands at the death of Moses were fully felt by Joshua ; but they only braced his energies, and nerved him for the accomplishment of the undertaking. And he received special encouragement. When the thirty days' mourning for Moses were past, and the people looked to his successor to fill the blank left by the departure of their trusted leader and lawgiver, a communication was made to Joshua by God, either by direct revelation or through the medium of the high priest. He was told to commence his labours by leading the host across the river Jordan, which separated them from the chief portion of their promised inheritance ; the boundaries of the future kingdom were pointed out, from the desert of Arabia to the mountains of Lebanon which they could discern in the far north, from the Mediterranean Sea to the river Euphrates in the distant east ; all should be theirs. "There shall not any man," says God, "be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life ; as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee : I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage." His success was certain if he governed his conduct by the Divine command, and obeyed the book of the law which Moses had written for his instruction and guidance, and which has been preserved in the Pentateuch. Here were the comfort and assurance which were needed for the arduous enterprise. What more could be desired when God thus speaks to His servant? "Thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed ; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." The remaining years of Joshua are spent in carrying out God's design, and proving his claim to be the worthy successor of Moses, the servant of the Lord.

CHAPTER II.

JORDAN CROSSED.

Canaan described—Encampment at Shittim—Number of the people ; their character and spirit—Joshua's plan of campaig n—Jericho ; spies sent thither—Rahab—Escape of the spies and their covenant with Rahab ; their report—Preparation for crossing the Jordan—Appeal to the two-and-a-half tribes—The miraculous passage of the river—A possible explanation—Memorials of the event—Circumcision renewed—The Passover celebrated.

THE country which was to be occupied by the Israelites is now so well known owing to the graphic descriptions of modern travellers, and the valuable publications of the surveys made by the Palestine Exploration, that a few words on this subject will suffice. What we call Palestine is a district lying between 34.30° and 36.30° east longitude, and 31.15° and 33.15° north latitude. The extent from north to south is about 150 miles, and that from east to west about 80. If we reckon the average breadth at 70 miles, we have an area of 10,500 square miles. Thus its importance is in no sense due to its size. England is nearly five times as large, Scotland and Ireland three times. The area of Wales is reckoned at 7,300 square miles. The Greece which plays such a grand part in the history of mankind was but little more than twice the size of Yorkshire. Palestine is divided into two main portions by the remarkable valley of the Jordan, which river, rising under Mount Hermon near Paneas, or Cæsarea-Philippi, flows through Lake Merom or Huleh, thence to the Sea of Galilee, from whence, by a course which more than trebles the actual distance, it passes to the Dead Sea where it is lost. The width of the valley in which the river runs varies considerably, being in some places little more than two miles across, but

towards the south, at what is called the "Plain of Jordan," averaging some fourteen miles. But what makes this river so remarkable is the wonderful depression in which it lies ; while at Lake Huleh it is nearly at sea level, at its outlet into the Dead Sea, a distance of less than a hundred miles, it is 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, having at its source been 1,080 feet above it. With the eastern division of the country we have not much to do at the present time, as it had already been partially conquered in Moses' days, and given over for a possession to Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. It was Western Palestine that Joshua had to subdue. This is emphatically a land of mountains. There is, indeed, a level sandy plain on the coast, from five to ten miles wide, and the plain of Esdraelon in the interior, but speaking generally, we may say that the Lebanon range runs through the whole country, sending forth spurs to east and west, and makes it an intricate mass of bills. The central ridge, which in its southern portion maintains its distinct character, as it approaches the north breaks into two branches, the left and longest culminating in the bold headland of Carmel, the right forming the Mount of Gilboa.¹ Yet further north the Anti-lebanon range spreads into a vast table-land eastwards beyond the Jordan. To come to details : the maritime plain commences in the north at the defile of the Leontes or Litâny, about five miles north of Tyre ; here it is of very narrow dimensions, and after some twenty miles it is intersected by the Ladder of Tyre, a spur from Lebanon which reaches the sea. South of this it widens to some five miles, continuing till again interrupted at Acre by the hills of Upper Galilee. Here is the only natural harbour of the country, the Bay of Acre, closed on the south by the promontory of Carmel. Below this the Plain extends considerably in breadth, merging into the Plain of Sharon opposite Joppa, just south of which it is again narrowed by the protrusion of the Judæan mountains. South of this comes Philistia, an undulating country with a breadth of from nine to sixteen miles, and reaching from Ekron to Gaza, a length of thirty-two miles. Beyond this it sinks into the desert southward and westward. The mountains of Israel commence at a point in the Lebanon range called Mount Sannin, north-

¹ Here and elsewhere I am much indebted to Mr. Henderson's very useful little work on "Palestine," in Messrs. Clark's series of "Handbooks," which combines in one view the latest geographical discoveries.

east of Beyrouth, 8,500 feet above sea level. The hills as they trend southwards decrease in height, till by the Sea of Galilee they average but 900 feet. They are clothed with varied vegetation in strong contrast to the stern features of the more southern country, and their rich verdure and mixture of greensward and forest give a park-like aspect to the scenery which is abundantly charming. The range is first interrupted by the Plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel, which runs from the Jordan valley to the Bay of Acre. Above this, the conical hill of Tabor stands in grand isolation, as if broken off from the rest of the range by some convulsion of nature. "Tabor," says Sir R. Temple,¹ "is perhaps the most beautiful, though not the most striking, mountain in Palestine. Though not very high—2,000 feet above the sea—it rises out of the plain in isolated majesty. Its outline varies, of course, at very short intervals of distance. Its prevailing shape, by which it is usually recognized, is that of a broad dome. Its sides are steep and clothed with oak or terebinth forests, through which the grey rock frequently peeps. On its summit are traces of fortifications, walls, and great bevelled stones. It clearly appears to have been occupied by a town when Joshua's forces conquered the country." The southern boundary of the plain is formed on the east by the mountains of Gilboa, which extend from the hills of Samaria, and by the long stretch of Carmel which touches the sea on the west. South of Esdraelon the country is a mass of hills, among which are noted the hill of Samaria, and Ebal and Gerizim, between which is the fair vale of Shechem. South again we come on Shiloh and Bethel, which, with many other localities, we shall have occasion to notice hereafter; and ten miles further we arrive at Jerusalem, which stands in its unique situation 2,500 feet above the sea. It conveys a vivid impression of the small size of the country with which we are concerned, when we consider that the distance between Samaria and Jerusalem, the rival capitals of later history, is only thirty-five miles, not half as far as that between York and Lancaster. South of Jerusalem the land gradually rises, till at Hebron, twenty miles off, the height is 3,500 feet. Thence it sinks by degrees into the desert plateau. At the slope of these hills a great valley is formed, which is watered by the drainage from the high land. This is known as the Negeb, or South-country.

¹ "Palestine Illustrated," 209 f.

From the central backbone valleys run eastwards to the Jordan and westwards to the Mediterranean. Some few of these hold perennial streams, but most are watercourses only in the rainy seasons, being at other times rocky channels with a very scanty supply of verdure. The Judæan hills fall in gentle steppes on the westward towards Philistia, forming what is called the Shephelah or lowland. The above description gives a general impression of the physical features of Western Palestine ; more definite details will be found in the accounts of the territories allotted to the tribes.

As regards the fauna of the country, some of the animals once common are found no longer. The lion, bear, and wild bull are extinct. But the ibex, or wild goat, roebuck, hart, wild boar, leopard, hyæna, wolf, jackal, still exist. And the flora is still the same as in these early days. The vine, olive, fig, and various fruits—indeed, all “the trees mentioned in the Old Testament are, without exception, still found in Palestine. The oaks that sheltered the patriarchs and their tents are of three kinds. The famous terebinth (pistachio) can still show individual trees of remarkable beauty. The acacia, or shittim, which supplied wood for the tabernacle, is common to this day. The juniper, under which the prophet rested, is the Retem broom (*genista*), and is reported as lighting up the desert with white blossoms. The locust-tree, the pods of which are believed to have been the husks eaten by the prodigal, is often found. The balm of Gilead and Engedi is identified with the zakkum, from the berries of which a healing oil is extracted ; and the camphire of the Canticle with the Henna, whence pink dye is obtained for personal adornment. Other trees, as the sycamore, the ash, the plane, the elder, the hawthorn, the arbutus, the tamarisk, may be mentioned.”¹

The Israelites were now encamped on the Plains of Moab at Abel-Shittim, a place so named from the acacia trees which grew there, and which are now found throughout the whole district, but which probably had not been seen in such profusion since the host had left the wilderness of Sinai. At this spot, near the mouth of the Jordan, the mountains on both sides retire, leaving on the east bank a plain of some five miles in width, corresponding to the plain of Jordan across the river. Here in a veritable oasis extending to the shore of the Dead Sea the people had pitched their huge camp, of black tents, which looked across

¹ “ Palestine Illustrated,” 120, 121.

the Jordan to the luxuriant park of Jericho. The encampment must necessarily have been of very large extent. The number of the Israelites who originally took part in the Exodus is reckoned at 600,000 "that were men"; this would imply a grand total of some two millions. In the census taken at Sinai during the second year of the Wandering the number of able-bodied men was 603,550, exclusive of the Levites, whose males amounted to 22,000. The last numbering made just before the invasion showed a diminution, there being now only 601,730 males, omitting the Levites who had increased by 700. But taking the computation at the lowest figure, and allowing the women and children to be four times as many as the men, the host gathered on the Plain of Acacias (Ghor es Safieh) must have amounted nearly to two and a half millions of souls. Of these the very elderly, men of sixty and upwards, had been reared in Egypt, but the bulk of the people had been born and grown up in the wilderness, and had profited by the stern discipline of their hard life. They had come forth from Egypt a horde of slaves, spirit-broken by oppression and injustice, enervated in some cases by the luxuriousness of Goshen, enfeebled in others by labours beyond their strength. But the pilgrimage in the desert had braced their energies and taught them many needful lessons. They had learned obedience by the things which they suffered; their dependence upon God and their trust in His care had been largely confirmed. They felt themselves agents in a mighty undertaking wherein to be blindly submissive was to succeed. A law had been given them which touched every relation of life in minutest detail. They had become an organized community, knit together by common interests and institutions and worship. Tried by adversity, and trained by hardship, conscious of a Divine mission, and enthusiastic in pursuit of their great idea, the Israelites were gathered together under their leader, full of hope, courage, zeal, and devotion.

The distant view of Jericho must have been then in its chief features such as it is now. Though the vegetation has changed in character, yet the thick belt of evergreen trees was there, and behind them the brown mountain, with its sharp outline and scarped sides, standing apart from the neighbouring range which flanks the upland of Judæa, and rising a thousand feet above the plain.*

* "Palestine Illustrated," 103.

The usual course of invaders of Palestine was to make their attack from the south. The Egyptian forays had always been so conducted. Nearly forty years before this time the Israelites themselves had made an unsuccessful attempt in that direction. There were many reasons which rendered it inexpedient to repeat this experiment. The country was well prepared for resistance in that quarter ; there were innumerable strongly fortified towns to bar progress ; the whole mass of enemies stood in the way, with reinforcements to any extent at their back ; new difficulties would have arisen at every moment, and each victory won at severe cost would have only preluded new battles, and drained the resources of the invaders who had no reserves whence to draw fresh supplies. Joshua's plan, whether originating from Divine suggestion or contrived by his own natural and acquired skill, showed consummate generalship. He designed to turn his enemies' flank, to take their fortresses in the rear, and by a bold stroke to break through their centre, dividing the hostile forces, and with his whole strength attacking them in detail. Defended by the Dead Sea and the deep valley of the Jordan, with its rapid and unfordable stream, the eastern frontier was regarded by the Canaanites as tolerably secure, and they expected no invasion from that quarter. This false security offered the opportunity required. Here was a weak point which might be profitably attacked.

To carry out this manœuvre the city of Jericho must first be captured. It would have been the height of imprudence to march into the interior, leaving this formidable fortress with its military population unsubdued in the rear. But before Jericho could be reached, the Jordan must be crossed. However conscious of Divine protection and guidance, Joshua omitted no precaution which became a careful commander. He had himself had experience of the utility of making a reconnoissance of a country before attempting its invasion ; he therefore, as a preliminary measure on the present occasion, sent forth two young men as spies, with the utmost secrecy, directing them to make their way to Jericho, to examine carefully the topography, and the strength of the fortifications, and to discover the feelings and temper of the inhabitants. This city stood about six miles west of the Jordan, in a most fertile plain, surrounded by groves of palm-trees, whence it derived its name of the "city of fragrance." It had been built, or at any rate had risen to

importance, since the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and was now of vast extent and of considerable wealth, lying on the caravan road between Arabia and Damascus, engaging in trade with the East, and having foundries of brass and large stores of the precious metals. Situated on the very frontiers of Palestine, it commanded the two chief passes which led into the interior, of which one branched off to Jerusalem, the other north-west toward Michmash and Bethel. "It was thus the key of Palestine to any invader from this quarter."¹ The wretched little village of Riha or Eriha, which has been supposed to stand on the ruins of this stately town, is more than a mile south of the true site. This has been identified by Conder at Ain-es-Sultan, "Elisha's fountain," which rises from the foot of the limestone range at the back of the city, and is the cause of the rich luxuriance of vegetation which renders this tropical region so remarkable. Of the view of Jericho from the mountain Quarantaria, which rises immediately behind, and overlooks the site, Sir Richard Temple² thus speaks: "It is the morning time, and the sun has mounted not very far above the Eastern horizon. The prevailing tints of the sky are blue blended with amber. The mountain range of Moab is in shadow, and stands up in violet-grey against the sky. At its feet is the northern end of the Dead Sea, catching the sunlight and glistening in a silver sheet. On this side of the salt water is a long strip of desert land with reddish hues. Then comes the broad belt of sylvan verdure, which girdles Jericho as with a zone of emeralds. In front of this, and near to the foreground, though still much below the eye, are the fountain-reservoirs, the chief of which is a small sheet of water in which the sky is mirrored. From these the principal water channels are seen wandering in bright streaks among the overshadowing woods." In another place he speaks of the copious spring, identifying the spot, "which during all the past ages has bubbled up inexhaustibly from the bowels of the mountain, and has for several thousand years endowed the plains of Jordan with fertility. This is the water which the prophet Elisha blessed. This is the veritable source of that prosperity which made Jericho one of the gardens of the East, and the envy of surrounding nations. It is now called by the natives the Sultan

¹ Stanley, "S'nah and Palestine," 305.

² "Palestine Illustrated," 11.

Fountain. There is another spring called the Fountain of Dûk, an old Jewish name probably. These are the very fountains which gave life and wealth to a district where important events occurred in the history both of the Old and New Testament. They are, after the lapse of ages, still copious, and are discharging the same functions for agriculture to-day as they did 4,500 years ago."¹

Having received their commission, the spies set forth on the third day of the month Nisan, which would fall in our April. Swimming across the river, they made their way to Jericho, arriving there towards evening before the gates were shut. Here they were received in the house of one Rahab, a harlot, whither they had been directed as a place where guests were entertained, and where they could lodge without exciting suspicion. Or they may possibly have met Rahab outside the city, or traversing the streets,² heard from her where her house was situated, and agreed with her to conceal them, if necessary, during their short sojourn. Her house was built upon the city wall, like that at Damascus from which St. Paul was let down, and offered facilities for effecting escape, should danger menace. There is no reason for disputing the degraded condition of this woman. The term here used, both in the Hebrew and the Greek, and the references to her in the New Testament,³ leave no doubt on the subject. That she was an innkeeper also is very probable ; in this case the spies would naturally have repaired to her abode, not only as a place of public entertainment, but a resort where they might expect best to gather the state of general opinion. The encampment of the Israelites on the plains of Moab was, of course, well known to the inhabitants of Jericho ; and the arrival of these two strangers, and their reception in Rahab's house, were soon noised abroad. The report reached the ears of the king, already alarmed at the successes of Israel in the eastern district, and suspicious of

¹ " Palestine Illustrated," 109.

² Prov. vii. 9 f.

³ Heb. xi. 31 ; James ii. 25. Josephus ("Ant." v. 1. 2) and other writers, followed by some modern commentators, have endeavoured to vindicate Rahab from the charge of harlotry. But the language of the original forbids any other interpretation. That her name, with those of other notorious women, occurs in the genealogy of Christ, is explained by St. Jerome : " Ut qui propter peccatores venerat, de peccatoribus nascent omnia peccata deleret."

all who might come from that quarter, and he sent officers to Rahab, bidding her bring forth the men that were come to her, for their object was to spy out the country. Rahab, vicious and degraded as she may have been, was not wholly without better impulses, and possessed a fair knowledge of the events which had befallen the Hebrews from the Exodus unto this present time. This information she may have gathered from the traders and merchants who frequented the place and congregated at her house, which stood conveniently near the great gate of the city. The intelligence of the miracles which had attended the progress of the Israelites had sunk into her heart and produced a reverence for the Lord Jehovah, and a profound conviction that He had destined the land of Canaan for the possession of His chosen people. To resist the invaders seemed to her both impious and useless. Perhaps in all the city she alone regarded the strangers with favour; and when the king demanded their surrender, her only thought was how best to secure their present safety, and provide for their subsequent escape. She was a woman fertile in resources, and of great presence of mind. Being engaged in the manufacture and dyeing of linen, she had used the flat roof of her house as a drying ground for stalks of flax, the harvest of which had been lately gathered. Under separate heaps of this flax she hid the spies—a matter easy to effect with such material, the plant in that country growing more than a yard in height, with stalks as thick as a cane. Having completely concealed her visitors' presence, she went out to the king's messengers, and coolly told them that it was quite true that two men had arrived at her house, but she did not know who they were or whence they came; she added that they left her just before the gate was shut in the evening, and she was quite ignorant of their further movements. "Pursue after them quickly," she enjoined with apparent zeal and good faith; "for ye shall overtake them." The lies which she uttered were no offence to her unenlightened conscience. Such deceit in a good cause and under pressure of circumstances is constantly excused by a worldly morality. The severe standard of Christianity alone disallows to do evil that good may come, and denies that God's cause needs man's sinful manipulation. Misled by her mendacious intelligence, the officers hurried to the fords of the Jordan, thinking to intercept the strangers as they

returned to the camp. Meantime the gates which had been opened to admit the departure of the king's messengers had been immediately closed again, and were now so carefully watched that it was impossible for the spies to escape through them. To wait till morning would be to risk almost certain discovery. The strangers must be sent away secretly and by night. When all was quiet, and the whole city was locked in sleep, Rahab stole up to the place where the two Israelites were concealed, and urged them to depart at once and hide themselves in the mountains till the pursuit relaxed, and then to make their way back to their own people. But before detailing her plan for their escape, she made a very remarkable confession of her faith in the God of Israel, and her confident expectation that the land would be conquered by the Hebrews. The intelligence of God's miraculous interposition at the Red Sea and elsewhere, the utter defeat and annihilation of Sihon and Og, and now the rumours concerning the might and multitude of the host encamped across the Jordan, had worked in her heart, and produced faith in Jehovah. In her countrymen, she asserts, these marvellous events had occasioned only panic and astonishment. "Your terror is fallen upon us," she says, "and all the inhabitants of the land faint and melt away before you." Being perfectly assured that Jericho would fall into the hands of the invaders, she entreats the spies to return the kindness which she has shown to them by sparing herself and her father's family when the city is taken. This they readily engaged to do on condition that all those whom she wished to save should be gathered together under her roof, and should on no account go forth from her doors when the capture was effected. The harlot's house, as we have said, was built against the city wall, the top storey rising above it and overhanging it. From a window thus placed she let the men down by a cord, and having whispered to them her last instructions, she was assured that they would loyally keep faith with her; and in order that her house might be distinguished in the sack of the town, they desired her to fasten in the window the cord used in their descent, which being dyed of a bright scarlet colour could not escape notice. Turning their backs on the doomed city, the young men fled to the mountains on the north or west, which in their cavernous recesses offered many safe hiding-places. Most naturally they would seek Quarantaria,

which "stands up right behind Jericho, and with its mass of tawny or whitish rock forms a background to the mounds that mark the site of the ancient city. Its scarped sides and reddish ochre colour contrast with the foliage and verdant gardens near its base."¹ This mountain became an abode of hermits in later years, when tradition pointed it out as the scene of our Lord's forty days' fast and temptation. The numerous caves, most of which are of primeval origin, must have offered a ready shelter to these anchorites in Christian days, as they did to Joshua's spies at this time. These Israelites, after remaining there during the next day, made their way back to their countrymen, having effected their business within three days. On their return they reported to Joshua what they had seen and heard. Jericho was a rich and populous city, strongly fortified with high and solid walls, and capable of offering an obstinate resistance; but the inhabitants had lost all spirit, and were sunk in hopeless despondency; and in fact such was the general feeling throughout the country. We know from other sources² that the present time was most favourable to the invaders. The constant wars between the Hittites and the Egyptians had brought much misery on the Canaanitish cities, which were plundered and sacked by both parties, as occasion offered. There could be no united opposition to the invader in a country exhausted by these long-continued hostilities; and though in face of imminent danger some of the petty kings, as we shall see, combined in an attempt at resistance, there was no general rising of the whole country against the aggressive strangers; and Joshua's tactics, of crushing his enemies in detail, was rendered practicable and successful.

The first step in the invasion was the crossing of the Jordan. As a preliminary to this undertaking, Joshua removed the encampment from Shittim to the bank of the river. This was done with the utmost expedition; and as the distance was not great, some five miles at most, by the tenth of the month all was ready, preparations were completed, and stores of food provided, as the miraculous supply of manna would cease when once the river was crossed. There was one other matter to be arranged previously. An appeal had to be made to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, who had been allowed to settle in Gilead and Bashan, the territory

¹ Temple, 110.

² See., e.g., Prof. Sayce, "The Hittites," pp. 24 f

conquered by Moses on the eastern side of Jordan. These were now reminded by Joshua of the engagement by which they had bound themselves to help their brethren in their invasion of Western Palestine, and to see them established in their possessions before they finally entered upon their own inheritance.¹ This they cheerfully consented to do, stipulating that their wives and children should be left safely guarded in their new abodes, while the picked warriors among them shared the dangers of the campaign. Their answer to the leader's appeal was marked by loyalty and fraternal affection. "According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee : only the Lord thy God be with thee, as He was with Moses. Whosoever he be that shall rebel against thy commandment, and shall not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death ; only be strong and of a good courage." In effect, leaving some 70,000 men to protect their homes and flocks, the two and a half tribes sent 40,000 soldiers to the war.

The requisite orders were transmitted to the host through the appointed officers (*shoterim*), who exercised judicial functions, and likewise attended to the duties of the commissariat. The people were prepared ; at daybreak on this tenth of Nisan (probably the first day of the week, as they rested on the previous day, which may have been the Sabbath), they stood expectant, looking blankly on the turbid yellow waters which rolled between them and the Promised Land. It was now, as we have seen, the flax and barley harvest ; the hot weather had set in, and the snows of Lebanon and Hermon were melting fast and sending a huge volume of water down the deep channel of the Jordan. The river bed itself is little more than thirty yards across in the neighbourhood of Jericho, and usually the water is so shallow that one can wade across it with the greatest ease ; but on each side of this bed is a wider channel called the Zor ("depression"), which is only filled at flood time, when Jordan overflows its usual banks. The river at such times is a mile wide and of great depth. Such was its condition on this momentous day. How was it to be crossed by this heterogeneous host ? The pillar of cloud had ceased to guide their movements, but they were still led by God. He had warned Joshua that he was to conduct the people over the river, and

¹ Numb. xxxii. 20 ff. ; Deut. iii. 18 ff.

the servant of the Lord had but to obey, leaving the way to Him who directed the march. So, brought face to face with their promised possession, the people waited the summons to advance. No longer now a horde of slaves, as when their fathers fled from Egypt, full of fears, trembling at the sight of arms, shrinking in abject terror at the journey that lay before them, the host encamped at this time on the river's bank had learned much in their long pilgrimage, had seen hard service, had been tried in war, and endured hardship, and proved themselves valiant soldiers, and now were willing and eager to go whithersoever Joshua might lead them. So as they looked across the torrent to the green terraces on the other side, they despaired not ; they remembered the passage of the Red Sea, which some among them had seen, of which all had often heard, and they had trust in their leader and faith in God. Would not the Lord work wonders for them as He had done for their fathers ? Would not His hand be over Joshua as it was over Moses ? On them thus expectant came the word : " Sanctify yourselves ; for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you." It is not mere ceremonial purification that is meant, but the cleansing of the conscience, and the turning of the heart to God in faith, so as to be ready to receive duly the subsequent manifestation of God's love and power. This was the people's part. And to Joshua it was said : " This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." We gather from what is subsequently said (iv. 10) that Moses had communicated to his successor certain directions concerning the passage, though they are nowhere recorded in our present narrative. By what means the swollen stream was to be crossed, this was not expressly divulged ; only the order was given, that as they had hitherto followed the guidance of the pillar of cloud, so, now that that was withdrawn, they were to follow the ark ; but it was also enjoined that they were not to press irreverently upon this special symbol of God's presence, but to keep at a respectful distance from it, only watching where it was carried, and pursuing its track without fear whithersoever it should lead, though this was a way which they had not passed heretofore. Now the ark is taken from the tabernacle by the priests, its appointed guardians, and by them solemnly borne to the margin of the river ; the people watch-

ing from their higher position, when they see the procession approach the water some half-mile distant, arise and follow the symbol of Jehovah's presence ; for they have been told that when the feet of the priests that bear the ark shall be dipped in the waters of Jordan, a way shall be opened for the people to pass over. Down the steep slope the strange procession wound, the host following wondering, expectant, awestruck. Without stay or hindrance the priests, silently, resolutely press on ; they reach the rushing stream ; their feet are wetted by the turbid waters ; when, lo ! a wonder ensued ; the river bed began to dry up ; the stream shrunk to its natural channel, and then deserted even this ; the waters that had come hurrying tumultuously from the north on their right were cut off, the supply thence ceased, and those that were flowing down the steep incline towards the Dead Sea soon passed away, leaving the whole channel bare and dry. Some impediment had suddenly obstructed the river's course far away, near the city Adam in the district Zarthan, where the river Jabbok enters the valley or where now the ford Damieh exists, eighteen miles above the passage of Jericho. Thus a huge breadth of the river's bed was dried ; at any point in this space the river could be crossed. The narrator speaks of the occurrence as distinctly miraculous. There is no natural agent mentioned, no strong east wind to dry the passage, as in the analogous miracle at the Red Sea. Our account reads : "The waters which came down from above stood, and rose up in one heap ; and those that went down towards the Sea of the Arabah, even the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off." If we look for the secondary cause of this phenomenon, we may perhaps consider it to have been occasioned in the following way. At a point where the valley is most contracted, and the mountains on either side approach most closely the river bed, a fall of cliff took place, which for a time completely blocked the course of the stream. If the channel here was tolerably level, and the valley widened above the obstruction so as to allow the imprisoned waters to expand in the form of a lake, the dam need not have been of great height ; and once established it would soon be increased and strengthened by the accumulation of débris brought down the stream. As long as this obstacle remained, the waters below it would fail and be cut off ; and many miles of the bed being emptied, the great host could cross it at various points, and thus

in a comparatively short time effect the passage. At the same time, it must be noted that modern research has failed to find any token of such a catastrophe having taken place, though that fact is not absolutely adversative, as the annual floods would naturally have occasioned immense changes and modifications in the river bed, and the wear and tear of three thousand additional years must be considered. If this is the natural explanation of the event, the miraculous character of the matter is seen in the providential ordering of the catastrophe at the particular time and place, and in the Divine foreknowledge which directed Joshua when to make the attempt, and anticipated the mode in which the result should be obtained. God uses the forces which He has ordained to produce the effects which He has designed ; and it is not wise for us to represent Him as interfering unnecessarily with the order of nature. He is honoured rather by our recognition of His use of the ordinary laws which He has established.

Now, at the edge of the terrace which the flood had reached, the priests stood bearing the ark ; near them was Joshua, accompanied by twelve men chosen one from each tribe. Into the channel thus dried the multitude rushed ; the two and a half tribes, 40,000 strong, preceded the host ; men, women, children, cattle, followed in hot haste ; for a mile or more the river bed was filled with this tumultuous assemblage, while the ark remained in its position till the last straggler had safely crossed. The time occupied in the passage did not exceed a few hours, as the distance was not great, and conscious of the Divine interposition, the people made no unnecessary delay, but passed across with all the speed possible. When all had crossed in safety, the ark at length was moved and borne to the opposite bank ; and then the obstacle that had barred the way of the upper waters was removed, and the people on the western side beheld the river suddenly filling its usual channel, then rising higher and higher till it overflowed its banks as before. Their trust in God and their confidence in their leader were greatly enhanced ; henceforward they never swerved in their allegiance : "On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life." Down the ages the memory of the miracle was handed on and celebrated in psalm and hymn :

" The sea saw it, and fled ;
 Jordan was driven back. . . .
 What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest ?
 Thou, Jordan, that thou turnest back ?" (Psa. cxiv.)

To mark this great event, an event as important in its bearings and results as the passage of the Red Sea, two monuments were erected. The twelve representatives already mentioned were ordered to set up a cairn on the spot where the priests' feet had rested while the people crossed, and then to take up twelve huge stones from the bed of the river and arrange them as a memorial in the place where the new camp was formed after the passage. Such a mode of commemorating events is common in all ages and lands. The obelisks of Egypt, the cairns of northern countries, the dolmens of the Celts, are cases in point.*

Thus on the first day of the week, the anniversary of the day on which, forty years before, the Israelites had been directed to take up the lambs for the first Passover in Egypt, and the day afterwards made memorable by the resurrection of Joshua's great antitype, Jesus, the people came up from the river, and lodged in the Land of Promise. The encampment was fixed at a place called, perhaps by anticipation, Gilgal, in the fertile plain that lay between Jericho and the river, some five miles west of the latter and two from the city. The spot has been identified with the modern Tell Jiljulieh, where still remain some faint traces of ancient ruins. It was already marked out by heathen superstition as a sacred locality—the name, which means "a circle," probably referring to the erection of stone circles for some purpose connected with pagan worship, though Joshua gave a new meaning to the appellation. Here, on a rising ground, the camp was pitched and rudely fortified to fit it to be the headquarters of the people during the progress of further operations. No opposition had been offered to the crossing. Paralyzed by fear, or expecting no invasion during the annual flood, which, as they supposed, put a temporarily impassable barrier between them and the enemy, the people of Jericho and its neighbourhood had taken no steps to resist the strangers' entrance into their land. Nothing would have been

* Comp. Gen. xxviii. 18 ; xxxi. 45 ; xxxv. 14 ; Josh. xxiv. 26 ; 1 Sam vii. 12.

easier than to cut off such a rabble as they struggled out of the deep boulder-laden channel ; a few resolute men might have seriously impeded the passage, and inflicted immense loss, if they were unable wholly to check the inroad. Providentially nothing of this kind happened. Unimpeded, the Israelites were enabled to make good their position on the upper terrace of the western bank, and to begin the occupation of their destined inheritance, erecting the tabernacle here, and making Gilgal the central place of worship as well as the residence of the multitude not actually engaged in military expeditions.

The solemn pause before the commencement of hostilities was to be used in the service of religion. The Passover, long suspended, must be celebrated again before the people entered upon the new phase of their deliverance. Twice only had this great memorial feast been held—once at the Exodus from Egypt, once at the encampment under Sinai. Now it was time to gird themselves for the conflict by taking the sacrament of redemption. Why it had been neglected for so many years, and that under the eye of the legislator himself, is hard to understand. The uncircumcised, indeed, could not partake of it, and the rite of circumcision had been altogether omitted since the departure from the house of bondage ; but for many years the circumcised must have constituted a large majority of the host. Doubtless the abeyance of both circumcision and the Passover was owing to the same cause, whatever it might be. This could not have been from mere negligence and careless indifference. Moses and other good men would never have permitted a culpable supineness to interfere with the exercise of a religious duty. There must have been a moral cause for the omission. If the impossibility of procuring material for the unleavened cakes might have rendered the due celebration of the Passover impracticable, no such impediment obstructed the performance of the rite of circumcision, for which their frequent encampments and long delays in various localities offered every facility. The fact seems to be that the sin at Kadesh-Barnea (Numb. xiv. 29), where the people had stubbornly refused to obey the Lord's leading, had laid them, as it were, under an interdict, and placed them out of communion with God. The covenant was for the time abrogated, and therefore its initiatory rite and the great festival which significantly distinguished the people of God were omitted. Now

that they had taken possession of their inheritance they must place themselves in the position of the covenant people, pledged to serve with all their hearts the Lord who had promised to be their God and support and guide. God had performed His part of the covenant by accomplishing the promise which He had made to Abraham ; it behoved them to do their part of which circumcision was the appointed pledge. It was not likely that Joshua would neglect this great duty, though he had every reason to avoid delay. As a skilful strategist he well knew the importance of striking the first blow, and *that* before the enemy recovered from panic and had time to combine in defence of their country. But military expediency must give way to religion. Convinced that he was imperatively called upon to re-establish the suspended relation between God and His people, he saw no danger in carrying out the obligation ; He whose servant he was, whose command he was executing, would secure their safety while accomplishing His requirements. They need have no fear who are faithfully treading the prescribed path. Had not God engaged to guard their homes from every enemy when they appeared before Him at the great festivals,¹ and was not this sufficient encouragement to cast away all apprehension in attending to the immediate duty before them ? Thus Joshua reasoned, and proceeded at once to action.

It has been calculated that some 700,000 males required to be circumcised, while there were at least 300,000 fathers of families or other fit persons who might perform the ceremony. The former consisted of the generation that had grown up during the wanderings in the wilderness, the latter of those who had been circumcised in Egypt, and were under twenty years of age at the time of the great rebellion. There was no backwardness in the people when this duty was brought to their notice. They had perfect confidence in their leader ; the late events that had taken place, especially the wonderful passage of the Jordan, had shown that God was with them, and was guiding their movements ; there was no time for delay ; within three days the Passover must be celebrated, and all must be prepared to take part in the great festival. So, with a faith which is very remarkable when we remember that for some days after the operation they would be incapacitated

¹ See Exod. xxxiv. 24. Comp. ib. xxiii. 27.

for war, they all agreed to submit to the painful rite. As this was a very special and important occasion, special instruments were used. Certain sharp knives made of flint were employed, which being thus, as it were, consecrated to a religious purpose were never degraded to any other office, but, as Jewish tradition states,¹ were carefully laid aside by Joshua, and after his death were deposited in his grave at Timnath-Serah. Thus by the reception of circumcision "the reproach of Egypt" was rolled away, and a new interpretation was given to the name of the locality where the camp was pitched. Gilgal no longer meant "a circle," recalling the idolatrous rites of heathen superstition, but, under Hebrew manipulation, signified "rolling," and henceforward was a standing memorial that all reproach connected with Egypt was removed. What is meant by this expression is not quite clear. If it signifies "the reproach which comes from the Egyptians," it would refer to taunts cast upon them by their old enemies, deriding their claims to supernatural guidance and their boast of occupying the Promised Land. But the Egyptians had good reason to recognize the power and activity of the God of Israel, and it is not certain that they had scoffed at the pretensions of the Israelites, or that the latter ever heard of these insulting remarks, if they were uttered. More probably, the reproach is that which attached to them as having been a nation of slaves in a house of bondage. Others think that the reproach applies to their want of circumcision, which, in the eyes of Egyptians who generally practised it, was a great disgrace. This, of course, suggests that while resident in Egypt the Israelites more or less neglected the rite —a statement incapable of proof, and indeed repugnant to the words in Joshua v. 5 : "Now all the people that came out of Egypt were circumcised." Josephus² explains Gilgal as meaning "freedom," connoting release from the servitude in Egypt and from their long sufferings in the wilderness. They entered now upon a new life, as freemen in their own destined inheritance, once more partakers of the covenant, the household of God. As the pious Israelite was ordered to instruct his children concerning the memorials erected on the opposite banks of Jordan, so he would possess in the very name Gilgal

¹ See Sept., Josh. xxi. 42, and xxiv. 30 (31).

² "Ant." v. 1. 11

a token of the renewal of the pledge between the people and God, to which they might always look with a confidence that He who had begun the good work would carry it on to the appointed end. Here was a lesson written in plain characters, and the lesson was this: that duty was the only consideration, that it was superior to all worldly wisdom, and was not to be controlled by any fear of possible consequences, and that obedience to the Lord's voice secured His protection. Such thoughts must have animated the minds of the Israelites of that day as they submitted to the sacramental ceremony. We, under the brighter light of the Gospel, see a further and a deeper significance in the transaction. It implied mortification and purity, that no one was fit to engage in the sacred war who was not wishing and willing to conquer the lusts of the flesh and live a life of hardness, and that the Lord's soldier must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.

Now being consecrated anew, being once more the Lord's people, the Israelites celebrated the Passover on the appointed day, the fourteenth of the month Nisan, the fortieth anniversary of that first solemnity when they ate it in haste, being thrust out of the land of Egypt. Only once again had the festival been held till this moment. It had been observed during the residence at Sinai, but after the mutiny at Kadesh-Barnea the people were not worthy of it, and its performance was not enforced. To a large majority of the present Israelites the feast and its accompanying ceremonies were entirely novel; they entered upon them with a strange and awestruck joy; the impression thus made was not lightly effaced. All was done decently and in order. The lamb was eaten on the fourteenth; on the next day the first-fruits were presented, and on the sixteenth the people partook of the produce of the land, consisting in part of the new corn left by the inhabitants when they fled before the invaders, or brought by them on sale to the camp. And now the manna ceased to fall; the miraculous supply which for nearly forty years had fed this immense multitude failed, and was found no more. They had entered on a region of plenty, rich in grass and flowers, a land flowing with milk and honey; henceforward their wants would be satisfied from the natural sources around them. No longer did they eat "bread of the mighty";¹ but that all generations might know

¹ Psa. lxxviii. 25. "Angels' food," A.V.

how their fathers were supported during their weary pilgrimage, an omer of manna was placed in the ark, where it remained uncorrupted till the destruction of the temple and the consequent dispersion of its contents.

CHAPTER III.

JERICHO CAPTURED.

The capture of Jericho necessary—Joshua encouraged by a revelation—Scriptural Theophanies—Investment of Jericho by a religious ceremony—The number seven—Miraculous fall of the city; its destruction—The ban—The curse on Jericho—Fate and character of Rahab.

THE claims of religion having been duly observed, and the coming war having been thus consecrated and made a holy war, it was expedient that an advance should be made immediately, ere the enemy had recovered from the panic wherewith the recent events had affected them. The first duty that lay before the Israelites was evidently the capture and destruction of Jericho. It stood directly in their path; it was the key to the passes that led to the interior; it contained a strong military population, which could not be safely left in their rear, or in proximity to the camp at Gilgal, where was deposited all that was most precious to them, their wives and children, their wealth, their flocks and herds, and whence alone they could draw reserves to supply any losses that they might sustain in their dangerous expeditions. For these reasons Jericho must be conquered. But how were they to accomplish this enterprise? It was a well-fortified city, with strong walls and massive gates; the Israelites were wholly inexperienced in sieges; they had no engines, they possessed no skill in such military engagements; a long blockade would have laid them open to attack from surrounding tribes. It was evident that the place must be taken at once, or their own safety would be most seriously endangered, and the fruits of their sudden and unexpected inroad be irrevocably lost.

Perplexed by such thoughts, but by no means desponding (for his confidence in Jehovah never wavered for a moment), Joshua, when the Paschal solemnities were completed, made his way towards Jericho, and, sheltered by the groves of palm-trees which covered the ground around the city, proceeded to reconnoitre the place from a nearer position than any that he had hitherto occupied. To a modern soldier the fortress would have presented no very formidable barrier. It stood upon a gentle eminence, with no difficult ground immediately in its vicinity; the walls were lofty indeed, but not calculated to withstand battering operations, and there was no moat or glacis to delay an attacking party. It seemed not unlikely that a determined body of troops, provided with shields and scaling ladders, might effect a lodgment by means of a sudden assault, even though they had no means of breaching the walls. As Joshua, gazing earnestly on the scene before him, pondered on these things, his doubts were resolved in a wonderful manner. The details were taken out of his hands; the quarrel was the Lord's, and He was the real Leader of the enterprise. So he was suddenly confronted by the appearance of a warrior with his sword drawn in his hand standing between him and the city. Undismayed by the sight, Joshua boldly goes to meet him, and, like a watchful sentinel, asks, "Art thou for us, or our adversaries?" And the man answers, "Nay, I am neither one of thine enemies, nor one of thine own soldiers; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." Joshua, immediately recognizing the supernatural nature of the apparition, and prepared to expect miraculous interposition, fell on his face to the earth and worshipped, asking humbly, "What saith my Lord unto His servant?" and was told, as Moses under similar circumstances, to loose his shoes from off his feet, for the place whereon he stood was hallowed by the Divine Presence. Who and what was this mysterious Personage? Various have been the answers to these questions. They who reject supernaturalism affirm that the vision was subjective, presented to Joshua's mental perception, and consequent on the exalted state of his feelings and his conviction of being under the special guidance of heaven. The wording of the account does not confirm this view. Joshua advances to meet "the man," addresses, worships him, obeys his injunction. Evidently in the opinion of the narrator the vision is objective, a real

appearance of a mysterious personage. The Jews have thought that it was the archangel Michael, "the Prince" of the people of Israel, as he is called in Daniel (chap. x.), or Gabriel, the guardian angel of the Jews. But "the captain of the hosts of the Lord" is something higher than any created spirit. The appellation itself signifies not the leader of the armies of Israel, which are not called the hosts of the Lord. This term is applied to the angels and to the powers which they wield, even as God is called the Lord of hosts ; and it implies here that this Prince, with all His forces, spiritual and material, will be at their head and guide them to victory. That this was a true Theophany we may well believe ; though whether it was the appearance of the Logos, the Son of God, in a visible shape, or an angelic form through whom Jehovah deigned to manifest Himself, it is, perhaps, impossible to decide. Doubtless some of the revelations mentioned in Scripture are mental visions, impressions made upon the mind by the will of God, and having no objective existence, as when "the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision," or when "God did tempt Abraham,"¹ or in the case of the visions which the prophets or St. John "saw" ; but if we believe in the historical credibility of Scripture, we must acknowledge that the beholder on other occasions did look with his bodily eyes upon some supernatural visitant. Of course, there is never any manifestation of the Deity in His ineffable essence ; no man hath seen God at any time ; it is not the absolute nature of God that is revealed ; but in condescension to man's weakness the intervention of some angelic form, invested with Divine attributes, is employed to convey the message or disclose the will of God. And it was the general belief of the early Church that all these Theophanies were appearances of the second Person of the Holy Trinity, who, before His Incarnation, assumed the angelic form in order to communicate with His servants. The Arian controversy, which endeavoured to prove the Person of the revealed Son to be lower in nature than the unseen Father, tended to modify the earlier opinion ; and Augustine, strongly affirming the invisibility of the Son as God, asserts that if the Son appeared to the patriarchs, He used the intermediate agency of a created being, who represented Him, and who, being put temporarily in His place, exercised the authority and received

¹ Gen. xv. 1 ; xxii. 1.

the homage which especially belonged to the Divine Person whose apostle he was. Whatever judgment we form concerning these manifestations, we may see in them anticipations of the Incarnation, "lessons addressed to the eye and to the ear of ancient piety," preparing the way for the reception of the great event to which type, prophecy, history, looked forward, when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."¹

No doubt had Joshua of the Divine nature of the being who suddenly appeared to him. Divine interposition was not unexpected or unprecedented. The occasion seemed to demand such an occurrence. It was a great crisis in the history of Israel. As Moses at the inauguration of his mission had received the Divine revelation in the burning bush of Sinai, so now Joshua at the commencement of his campaign was to be encouraged and directed by a superhuman intelligence. If he had any doubts concerning his power of completing the conquest which he undertook, this Divine visitant assured him of victory. He was taught that Israel was only one small portion of the armies that were leagued with him; that the hosts of the Lord, the angels, the powers of nature, the heavenly influences, were ranged on his side; and that all these forces, spiritual and material, heavenly and earthly, were commanded by the great "Captain;" the angel of the Presence, who had guided their wanderings, and ordered them up to this present moment. No longer need Joshua disquiet himself about the means of capturing the city, on whose strong walls he was apprehensively gazing; no armed attack, no warlike expedients would be required; by a method utterly unexampled the place should be taken; religious ceremony should act the part of military onslaught, and thus all surrounding nations should know that the Lord fought for Israel. The celestial warrior then proceeded to give minute directions, unfolding a marvellous plan which in a week's time, without danger or bloodshed, should put the chosen people in possession of this formidable stronghold, fenced up to heaven, supplied with perennial springs of water, well provisioned for a siege, and garrisoned with a numerous, though now dispirited, body of troops.

On the first day of the week Joshua began to carry out the instructions communicated to him—the strangest assault on a

¹ See Liddon, "Bapt. Lect." ii. pp. 83 ff. (1867).

fortress that ever was made, a trial of faith that must have been of the severest character. All the fighting men, indeed, were marshalled in battle array ; but no weapons of war were to be used ; a simple procession was all that they were called to make, and this for six successive days, and on the Sabbath the victory should be accomplished. And thus it came to pass. The order observed was this : first marched the warriors, armed and equipped, in their usual divisions, under their tribal leaders ; these were followed by seven priests, each bearing one of the curved jubilee trumpets, and sounding it continually ; then came the central object of the procession, the sacred ark, borne on the shoulders of its appointed guardians ; and the long line was closed by the rereward, a battalion from the tribe of Dan to which that post appertained. Solemnly round the walls of the doomed city the wonderful procession moved ; no voice was raised, no shout of war ; silently, save when the regular blasts of the trumpets roused the loud echoes, the train passed on ; in silence they made their mysterious circuit, and having completed the perambulation, returned to the camp at Gilgal. For six days in succession this was done. Meantime the Canaanites remained quiet within their walls, as though the city was beleaguered, and all egress had been prevented by a force of besiegers. It would have been only natural that, trusting to the strength of their fortifications and their own skill in arms, they should have watched with derision the purposeless march of these feeble Jews, or, taking an opportunity, should have made a sudden sally, and inflicted serious loss upon the unattacking enemy. But nothing of the kind occurred. They were thoroughly cowed and terrified. This awful march with no attempt at assault, the religious character of the movement, the visible token of the presence of the great God of Israel, impressed them with a terror the very vagueness of which increased its numbing effect. The reputation of Moses was well known ; his claim to Divine revelation and to supernatural direction was allowed ; and now to his successor the same powers were transmitted ; proof had already been given that heaven was on his side, and some fresh intervention might now be expected. They watched and waited, not knowing how or when or where the blow would fall, but dimly conscious that a great calamity was close at hand, which they were powerless to control or avert. And by this six days'

march the Israelites were taught a lesson ; they learned that the Lord fought their battles, that their strength was to sit still, that their part was patience and faith, even as the Psalmist exactly expresses it :

“They gat not the land in possession by their own sword,
Neither did their own arm save them :
But Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance,
Because Thou hadst a favour unto them. . . .
For I will not trust in my bow,
Neither shall my sword save me,
But Thou hast saved us from our adversaries,
And hast put them to shame that hate us.
In God have we made our boast all the day long,
And we will give thanks unto Thy name for ever” (Psa. xliv.).

On the seventh day the proceedings were varied. Instead of marching round the city once only, on this day they compassed it seven times ; and as each circuit must have taken an hour and a half, they began the perambulation at the earliest dawn, so as to complete the proceeding before the evening fell. This, indeed, was no infringement of the Sabbath, for it was a religious work, performed in obedience to Divine command, and therefore of the nature of worship. We may remark, in passing, the recurrence of the number seven in this transaction, seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days. The number seven symbolizes perfection and rest. It may be regarded in two relations as six plus one, or as four plus three, and on these two relations its significance depends. In the former case its symbolism is presented in the account of the work of creation : “in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested.” So the works of creation, to find their rest and sanctification, must be united to *One*, that is, God. “The works of the world,” it has been said, “in themselves, as external to God, have no sanctification or rest until they return to God.” In the other relation, seeing that four is the signature of the world, and three of the Holy Trinity, four united to three represents the world united to God, the creation reconciled with its Creator, “thus making up the holy seven, which is of forgiveness, of covenant and reconciliation with God, and of rest in Him,” which, as the seventh day has no evening, knows

no end.¹ We may regard the number in the present transaction as denoting completeness and consecration ; the work was fully accomplished, and it was the Lord's work.

The seven circuits with the necessary pauses, even if we suppose that they were performed by relays of priests and soldiers, must have taken nearly twelve hours to accomplish ; so that the sun was sinking towards the Judæan hills as the last perambulation was made. And then the long silence was suddenly broken ; at Joshua's command a mighty shout was raised, as the pealing trumpets blared ; and lo ! the strong walls of the city crumbled away and fell with a terrible crash ; the bulwarks in which the evil inhabitants had trusted collapsed, and the Israelites advanced over the ruins, "every man straight before him" ; and though the Canaanites made some show of resistance, they were vastly outnumbered, and, panic-stricken, were quickly overpowered, and when the Sabbath was ended and the evening had come, the whole city was in the hands of the invaders.

If we take the history simply as it has reached us, we must consider the capture wholly miraculous. This is no hyperbolical expression of the fact that before Jehovah's will and His people's courage the strongest fortifications must collapse.² There is no question of undermining the walls, or of sudden and irresistible assault ; the narrator knows nothing of such measures. In his view, and in that of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the fall of Jericho was a signal triumph of faith. It was plainly not by their own power, or skill, or courage, that the Israelites effected the conquest ; they could not for a moment assert that it succumbed to their furious attack. God gave it into their hands : it was His marvellous work. There was fighting enough to come hereafter before they were settled in their land ; but their entrance into it was wholly God's doing, their part being quiet trust and perfect obedience ; in this lay their victory. Whether any or what natural agencies were employed in the demolition of the walls we know not. The historian, probably an eye-witness of the occurrence, describes what he saw, and gives no particulars or explanation of the phenomenon. An earthquake, which caused wide and extensive breaches in the ramparts, would answer all the requirements of

¹ From a paper on "The Use of Numbers in Holy Scripture," contributed by me to a long-forgotten magazine.

² Ewald, "History of Israel," ii. 248, Eng. Trans.

the narrative ; and that such disturbances were not uncommon in the district we have geological and historical evidence to prove. Such an event to the unsophisticated and unphilosophical minds of the beholders would seem a special intervention of the Lord who fought for them ; the secondary cause of the destruction was unknown to them, and their simple faith was satisfied by seeing a token of the power of God, and looked no further into the matter. But we recognize the Divine Providence which controlled the forces of nature so that the convulsion happened at the appointed moment ; we recognize the omniscience which directed the movements of Joshua, and placed him and his troops on the fated day in the ordered position. The miracle loses nothing of its importance because we conceive of God as using the natural powers which He Himself created, rather than working new wonders.*

Thus Jericho was captured and burnt, and its utter destruction was accomplished. It had been placed under the ban, devoted to annihilation, and was thus removed beyond the pale of mercy, so that we read, the Israelites "utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword," saving only the indestructible things, silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, which were brought into the treasury of the Lord. This terrible form of excommunication was not often inflicted. The word which is here translated in the Authorized Version "accursed" would be better rendered "devoted," as in Lev. xxvii. 28. It implies something cut off from common uses and given up to Jehovah without the possibility of redemption. This dedication might be either for preservation or destruction ; if living the devoted thing was to be slain ; otherwise it was appropriated to the sanctuary. This distinction was observed in the case of Jericho : men and animals were destroyed, metallic articles were reserved for sacred use. When other Canaanite cities were taken, property was exempted from the ban ; cattle were preserved when the inhabitants were put to the sword ;² but Jericho, as the firstfruits of the conquest of the land, was wholly devoted to Jehovah, and all that was therein was His peculiar possession. This being the case, no one could rightly appropriate to his own use anything whatever ; though the city was

* Tuck, "Handbook of Biblical Difficulties," 500 ff.

² See Deut. ii. 34, 35 ; iii. 6, 7 ; Josh. viii. 26, 27 ; x. 28.

sacked and the inhabitants were massacred, no soldier might derive the least benefit from the rich plunder ; it was all the Lord's ; to take any portion of it was sacrilege. This was not only a religious, but a prudential measure. In the inhabitants of the country it struck a wholesome dread which tended to facilitate the invader's operations ; it tested the obedience of the Israelites thus debarred from availing themselves of the spoils of a rich city ; it also saved them from the temptations of luxury and inaction, which would have been fatal to the execution of the severe task that lay before them. Jericho, plundered and not destroyed, might have proved a Capua to the occupying forces. The ban had already been enforced in the case of the Canaanite cities of King Arad, when under Moses the people utterly destroyed these places with their inhabitants, and called them Hormah, *i.e.*, "Ban," or "Devoted to God."¹ But in his zeal for purity and vital religion Joshua was not satisfied with the demolition of the present city and the death of its inhabitants ; he bound his countrymen by a solemn oath never to rebuild it, but in accordance with the law of the ban, to let it be a heap for ever.² And to the end that the destiny of this evil place might be better remembered and handed on from generation to generation, he put the imprecation in a rhythmical form : "Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho ; with the loss of his firstborn shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it ;" *i.e.*, the builder shall lose his eldest son when he began the work, and his youngest should die on its completion ; it may be that the final restoration should leave the builder childless, his sons from the eldest to the youngest being cut off during the progress of the work. This curse was no mere insensate expression of human vengeance ; it contained a prophetic element, which gave it a distinctive character, and elevated it above all common vindictiveness. Here was a standing sermon, an acted parable, like the withered fig-tree in Gospel history, teaching a necessary and awful lesson. Jericho was the symbol of all that was degrading and foul ; its treatment was God's mark on the demoralizing idolatry which had there its stronghold ; it became in the eyes of future generations a representative of the judgment that awaits the abominable vices to which it was given over. Nor was it till the reign of

¹ Numb. xxi. 1 ff.

² Deut. xiii. 16.

the idolatrous king Ahab that any one was found hardy enough to tempt the fate invoked on the man who should rebuild the ruined fortifications. Though an open town soon arose in the immediate neighbourhood, and in later days a school of prophets was established there, it was one Hiel, a Bethelite, who, despising the old prophecy, some five hundred years afterwards raised again the interdicted fortifications, and incurred the penalty of his reckless profanity.¹ It is probable that the curse of Joshua referred rather to the re-erection of the lofty walls which made the city so formidable a stronghold, than to the building of houses on the site ; and we find that the place never ceased to be occupied, being included in the territory of Benjamin, the natural advantages of the situation outweighing the offence of its antecedents. Of the chequered history of Jericho we cannot now speak, but we may quote Dr. Edersheim's description of the locality, as it showed in Herod's time, which Josephus calls a little Paradise.² "All around wave groves of feathery palms, rising in stately beauty ; stretch gardens of roses, and especially sweet-scented balsam-plantations, of which the perfume is carried by the wind almost out to sea, and which may have given to the city its name (Jericho, 'the perfumed'). It is the Eden of Palestine, the very fairyland of the old world. And how strangely is this gem set ! deep down in that hollowed valley, through which tortuous Jordan winds, to lose his waters in the slimy mass of the Sea of Judgment. The river and the Dead Sea are nearly equidistant from the town—about six miles. Far across the river rise the mountains of Moab, on which lies the purple and violet covering. Towards Jerusalem and northwards stretch those bare limestone hills, the hiding-place of robbers along the desolate road towards the city. . . . Over all this strangely varied scene has been flung the many-coloured mantle of a perpetual summer."

The treatment accorded to Jericho was such as has approved itself to conquerors in all ages. Either to make a notable example which might have a deterrent effect upon possible opponents, or to inflict a lasting punishment, or to remove from power of active wrong a dangerous enemy, victorious generals

¹ x Kings xvi. 34.

² Joseph., "Bell. Jud." iv. 8. 3; Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus," ii. 350.

have not uncommonly doomed a city and its inhabitants to entire destruction, and uttered an anathema on any one who should attempt to rebuild it. Thus when Carthage fell before the irresistible arms of Rome, the Senate passed a decree that the walls should be destroyed, and every house within them levelled to the ground, and the ploughshare passed across the ruins ; and Scipio, the triumphant commander, imprecated a solemn curse on any who should raise a town on the same site ; and the failure of C. Gracchus' attempt to establish a colony there a few years after was attributed to the working of this curse. Thus in mythic lore Agamemnon was said to have laid a similar interdict on the restoration of Troy, and Croesus on Sidene.² And with regard to the devotion of the contents of a captured city to the Supreme Power, we find such statutes in force among many nations.³ The Gauls, Caesar says,³ devote to Mars most of what they take in war ; of what remains, they dispose in the following way : if they are animals, they sacrifice them ; if they are other things, they pile them into a heap which is religiously preserved from molestation. Rarely indeed does it happen that any one presumes to appropriate any of the spoil thus devoted ; he who infringes the rule is most severely punished, tortured, and put to death. Tacitus⁴ notes that in a war between the German tribes, the Hermunduri and Catti, the latter were almost annihilated, as their enemies had devoted them to Mars and Mercury, *i.e.*, to their gods Tyr and Wodan, a measure which involved the utter destruction of men and horses and all animate things. So according to the precept of the Jewish law a thing devoted to Jehovah could not be re-appropriated, redeemed, or sold ; if it was living, it was put to death ; if it was land, it passed into the possession of the priests ; if it was anything else, it belonged to the treasury of the sanctuary. In the treatment of the conquered Canaanites generally we note the existence of the fiery zeal which could brook no antagonism to its own high ideal, which saw in its religion the only possible intercourse with the Deity, and viewed with utter loathing and attacked with constant vehemence all that was opposed or inimical to Divine truth. Conceiving themselves possessed of a unique vocation, and in-

² Strabo, lib. xiii., "De Ilio," p. 601. Appian, "Punica," § 135 sq.

³ Lange on Josh. vi. p. 73. Eng. Trans.

³ "Bell. Gall." vi. 17.

⁴ "Annal." xiii. 52.

spired by the highest confidence, the Israelites regarded all opponents of their claims as the enemies of heaven and devoted to extermination. In the young energy of their new institutions it seemed to be an important principle to eliminate all that was foreign, all that was of lower stamp, all that might sully the purity of the holy people. That this involved the wholesale sacrifice of human lives and the destruction of valuable property was a consequence that offended no scruples ; it was all done to the honour of God and in the interests of true religion.

One household alone in the universal destruction of Jericho escaped the general fate. In accordance with the agreement previously made, which Joshua scrupulously maintained, the spies were ordered to identify Rahab's house, and to save her and her family in the massacre. The house was at once recognized by the scarlet line which hung from the window, and it was seen that the portion of the wall adjoining the edifice had not fallen with the rest. The spies found the woman and her relations and family collected under the one roof, and awaiting with anxiety the result of the capture and sack of the city, though Rahab herself had full confidence in the cause of the Israelites and the honour of the messengers, even as it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 31) : " By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace." She and all her household were safely conveyed from the ruin and slaughter, and brought on the road to the Israelites' camp ; but they were not yet allowed to enter its sacred precincts ; they were still heathens and legally unclean, and as such their presence could not be tolerated. But, whatever may have been the views of the rest of the family, Rahab herself learned to believe in Jehovah, and was admitted as a proselyte into the holy fold, and when the Book of Joshua was written she was highly honoured and "dwelling in Israel unto this day." Her name, indeed, disappears from the Old Testament, but it comes forward again in the genealogy of our blessed Lord as given by St. Matthew. Herein we read that Rahab, or, as she is there called, Rachab, became the wife of Salmon, the father of Boaz, and thus an ancestress of Christ. This Salma or Salmon was the son of Nahshon, mentioned as the fourth in descent from Judah, and the chief prince of the tribe. It is quite possible that he was one of the two spies, as it is not likely that any but men of

eminence would have been sent on that momentous business, and we know that on the former occasion the selected emissaries were all of them "heads of Israel." Gratitude for his ingenious rescue from a situation of extreme peril may have led him to look with favour upon his rescuer and to condone past disgrace. At any rate Rahab's subsequent conduct effaced her evil past, and she shares with three other women the dignity of being handed down in the genealogy of the great Son of David, who "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."¹ The other women mentioned are Tamar and Bathsheba, both scandalous in their lives, and Ruth, a heathen Moabitess; and we learn to see in them instances of the election of grace, and the renovation that comes with repentance and faith, and the call of the Gentiles to be united with the people of God. From an inhabitant of this iniquitous city, Jericho, sprung the family of David, and the lineage of the Messiah who was to carry salvation to the ends of the earth. Let us linger for a few minutes on the character of Rahab. We must not look with Christian eyes upon her evil occupation. The tone of feeling in her own country was infinitely low, and would see nothing worthy of reprobation in her mode of life. That she was living in sin or incurring heavy guilt never crossed her mind; nor was it till she was brought face to face with the purity of the Mosaic law that she recognized a higher standard of morals. We see in her a woman of warm natural affection, which she showed by unusual solicitude for the safety of her relations; one of ready resources and much astuteness, exhibited by her reply to the king's officers and her concealment of the spies; and one possessed of a tenderer heart and more humane feelings than were usually found in an age and a land where man's life was little regarded, and pity for an enemy was unknown. As to her untruthfulness, the sacred historian does not commend it; he simply records it, pronouncing no opinion upon its morality. Here again we must beware how we try her by the Christian standard. Truth was not regarded as a duty any more than it is now in the East; lying did not offend the conscience of a Canaanite; he had no idea of

¹ The arguments for the statements in the text may be found in Lord A. Hervey's articles, "Salmon" and "Rahab," in the "Dict. of the Bible," and in his exhaustive work on the "Genealogies of our Lord."

the obligation of a strict adherence to veracity, and would hail with approbation a deceit or evasion which solved a difficulty or saved himself or a friend from danger. The falsehood which a Christian could utter only by doing violence to his sense of right came without effort from the lips of one who had never learned to be strictly straightforward and veracious, and who could deceive with the utmost coolness and self-possession. Rahab too is accused of playing a treacherous part towards her own countrymen in saving the lives of her national enemies and bargaining with them for the safety of herself and her family. But we must remember that she was not a mere unenlightened heathen. What was her language to the spies? "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you, when ye came out of Egypt, and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, unto Sihon and unto Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard it our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more spirit in any man because of you : for the Lord your God," she continues, "He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." Thus she had learned to distrust the religion of her countrymen, and was ready to receive the true faith when presented to her acceptance. She saw that Canaan would fall into the hands of the invaders ; that these were directed by an irresistible power ; and if self-interest led her to make terms with Israelites, she argued that the death of two men would not deliver Jericho from destruction, nor the immunity of herself and her family be an act of treachery to her countrymen, on whose fate the salvation of her household could have no effect whatever. But at the bottom of her conduct lay a principle of faith, which had more influence than all worldly considerations. Acting up to what she knew, she received further measures of grace, so that she was admitted into the chosen fold, and obtained the high position of becoming "a mother in Israel."

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST CHECK—ITS CAUSE AND REMOVAL.

Ai—Israelites defeated—Rending of clothes in token of grief—Joshua's complaint—The sin indicated ; fixed on Achan—The punishment of the criminal in the Valley of Achor—Successful attack on Ai, and destruction of the city—Fate of Bethel.

THE fall of Jericho opened the way to the interior of the country. Behind this city two chief passes led into central Palestine. The most practicable and direct was one which tended somewhat to the north, and is known now as the Wady Kelt. This gorge, some eight miles from its outlet in the Jordan Valley, meets the Wady Harith, a deep ravine, which also rises from the Arabah, north of Wady Kelt. Near the junction of these wadies in a "wild entanglement of hill and valley," and a little to the east of the well-known town of Bethel, stood the city of Ai or Hai. The identification of this place is still undetermined. The name means "heap" or "ruins," and is supposed to refer to the fact that the aboriginal inhabitants had in early days built a city there before the site was occupied by the later Canaanites. Captain Conder with much probability suggests the modern village of Haiyan as the representative of the ancient Ai. This place lies two miles east of Bethel on the side of the Wady Suweinit, which is the north-west continuation of the Wady Kelt. We hear of the Wady Suweinit in the history of Jonathan, when he and his armour-bearer made their unexpected and successful attack on the Philistine encampment. Though Ai was not a place of any very great size, and, as its whole inhabitants were twelve thousand, could not have possessed more than two thousand fighting men, its position was so strong, and its power of offence so evident, that Joshua could

not safely leave it in his rear, and its capture must be immediately effected. Leaving the smoking ruins of Jericho, and marching up the valley which offered a ready, though somewhat difficult, passage into the interior, he halted his army at some distance from the mouth of the defile, and proceeded to make a reconnoisance of this almost unknown country. Though under Divine direction, he was not relieved from the necessity of using all human precautions, and, like a skilful general, thought himself bound to examine the district before committing his troops to its intricacies. Accordingly he sent forward spies to note the nature of the ground and the strength of the enemy. These men on their return reported that they had reconnoitred the city of Ai, and that it was of no great size, and might easily be smitten by a small force. No account seems to have been made of Bethel in its immediate neighbourhood ; it was probably a place of small population, and less military importance ; though, doubtless, the leader's heart thrilled with joy and reverence, as he thought of the associations which that name conveyed, recalling his great forefather Abraham, and the patriarch Jacob. The Israelites had not well understood the lesson which the fall of Jericho was meant to teach ; they did not quite appreciate the kind of warfare in which they were engaged ; they had thought the seven days' peregrination a useless labour, and they deprecate any more proceedings of a like character. "Let not all the people go up," they say, "but let about two or three thousand go up and smite Ai ; and make not all the people to toil thither, for they are but few." Without asking counsel of the Lord, and reasoning only on military grounds, Joshua fell in with these representations, and sent a force of three thousand men against the city. Success had produced extravagant confidence ; the protecting hand of God seemed to be secured for their enterprise, whatever it was, and they had no fear of any disaster. But a stern lesson was in store. Boldly the appointed contingent marched to the attack, thinking to carry all before them. But as they toiled up the steep ascent at the head of which the city was placed, the garrison of Ai suddenly sallied forth and assaulted the Israelites with vigour. Panic-stricken, the latter turned and fled without striking a blow ; hurrying back towards the stone quarries which marked the sides of the hills, they were overtaken by the enemy, where the valley leading from Ai

turns to the East, and some of the hindmost were cut off, while the main body made good their retreat to the camp. Only six-and-thirty fell in the contest, but such a defeat was an unexpected and crushing blow. "The hearts of the people melted and became as water." A terrible misgiving seized them that the favour of Jehovah was withdrawn ; they felt as the Canaanites had felt at the news of their successes ; their late overweening confidence was broken ; downcast and dispirited they knew not what to think, whither to turn ; they were thoroughly demoralized. Joshua, as a gallant soldier, was grievously affected by the pusillanimous behaviour of the troops ; but like the rest he had more serious cause of apprehension than any mere instance of cowardice or imprudence in his army. He saw the effects of this disaster ; he saw in it also a token of Divine displeasure, and with a tendency to despondency which was natural to a temperament rather morally than physically courageous, he rent his clothes in utter grief and consternation. This rending of the clothes in token of mourning is continually mentioned in Scripture ; it is not only a spontaneous ebullition of grief, but is sometimes enjoined by authority, as in modern days particular modes of dress are prescribed on occasions of national mourning. Thus David enjoined his people to exhibit this token of grief at the treacherous murder of Abner.¹ No great destruction of garments was occasioned by the practice. The tear did not usually extend to more than a handbreadth from the upper border of the garment, though in the case of mourning for parents the rent was somewhat more extensive. There were also rules as to the interval that was to elapse before the aperture was sewn up, the time prescribed varying from a week to thirty days. Such outward evidences of sorrow were not permitted to the high priest, and Joshua, as the chief official in the congregation, would not have resorted to this symbolical action without the gravest reason. And he showed his sense of the situation by another typical ceremony ; he, with the elders of Israel, cast himself down upon the ground and put dust on his head, and lay sorrowing till eventide. Such token of humiliation has been common in all ages and countries. Thus man, defiling the noblest member of his body, reminds himself of his mortality, returns, as it were, to the ground from

¹ 2 Sam. iii. 31.

whence he was taken.¹ But Joshua knew whither to betake himself in any perplexity; prostrate in the tabernacle, where he had so often ministered to his departed Master, he poured forth his complaint and made his appeal to Jehovah. “Alas! O Lord God,” impatiently he cries, “wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to cause us to perish? Would that we had been content and dwelt beyond Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say to encourage the people, after that Israel hath turned their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall compass us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and what will Thou do for Thy great name?” It was a real and pressing danger that Joshua apprehended. The easy defeat of this assault would revive the courage of the Canaanites; they would see that the invaders were not invincible, and would combine to crush them at the outset of their enterprise. He uses the same argument that he had heard Moses urge under analogous circumstances. Often had that great leader exposculated with the Lord in similar terms. “Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, saying, For evil did He bring them forth to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? . . . The nations which have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which He sware unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness.”² Joshua is jealous for the honour of God, as well as torn with anxiety concerning the prospects of the invasion. Thus he wrestled in prayer, not yet understanding the cause of the present calamity. But an answer, stern and sudden, came to him: “Get thee up,” said the voice of the Lord; “wherefore art thou fallen thus upon thy face?” This was no time for weak lamentation; it was a moment for prompt action. There was a reason for the calamity; and this reason, God showed, was a sin committed by Israel which hid God’s face from them and removed them from His protection. This must be searched out and punished ere they could hope to be received into favour. The offence was a grievous one: the ban on Jericho

¹ Comp. 1 Sam. iv. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2; Job ii. 12; Lam. ii. 10; Hom. “Il.” xviii. 23 ff.

² Exod. xxxii. 12; Numb. xiv. 13 ff.; Deut. ix. 28.

had been broken, an act of sacrilege had been committed with many an aggravation. Israel had broken the solemn vow, had stolen what did not belong to them, had acted deceitfully, and had actually appropriated to their own use that which was devoted to God. Joshua may well have doubted of whom this was spoken ; but he knew that the sin even of one individual in such a matter was the sin of all till they had cleared themselves of it and punished the offender. The nation is treated as an organic whole ; the defilement of one member rendered the community accursed, and till the pollution was removed, the covenant was suspended and victory was not to be expected. The first thing to do under these circumstances was to discover the offender. Whoever he might be, he hoped to remain undetected ; but there were means of fixing the guilt on the delinquent which could not be evaded.

By God's command the people were to prepare for the investigation by ceremonial purification, and on the morrow to present themselves before the Lord, when the guilty person would be pointed out. The mode of detection is not specified, but it may have been by means of the lot, which was regarded as directed in its result by God. This method of divination was largely used throughout antiquity among all peoples ; and in Scripture we find it employed not only, as here, in criminal investigations, but also in apportionments of land and spoil, in selection of individuals for high stations or for dangerous exploits. It may have been that the inquiry was conducted by the high priest by means of the mysterious Urim and Thummim. The priest stood at the door of the tabernacle, the people passed before him in due order, and the selection was made by the voice Divine. As the genealogies were carefully kept, and every division and subdivision were accurately recognized, there was no difficulty in making the necessary examination. It was perfectly successful in the present case. With absolute impartiality the terrible ordeal was executed, and the offender was unerringly designated by the Judge of all the earth. First came the representatives of the tribes, and Judah was taken ; in Judah the clan of the Zera-hites ; in this clan the house of Zabdi was selected, and in this house the special family of Carmi ; and on the members of this family presenting themselves man by man, the guilt was fastened upon Achan, one of the sons. Thus in ever narrowing circles the offender was

gradually marked out, and in the presence of the watching, awestruck multitude the sin was centred on the individual. No evasion was possible ; the sinner could not deny his guilt. When Joshua tenderly yet sternly urged him to full confession, he at once acknowledges his transgression. " My son," says the leader, feeling for the criminal, though he knew there could be no alleviation of the incurred penalty—" My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord the God of Israel, to whom the secrets of all hearts are open, and make confession unto Him ; and tell me now what thou hast done ; hide it not from me." Now at length, when escape was no longer feasible, the wretched culprit owned his transgression and explained the temptation to which he had fallen victim. In the sack of Jericho he had found a goodly Babylonish mantle, one of those costly clokes or state-robcs worked artistically with figures of men and animals and esteemed as an article of the utmost value, which was a produce of the looms of the land of Shinar, and imported among other precious articles by the merchants who traded between Syria and the East. This he coveted and appropriated unseen by his comrades. Besides this, he had taken two hundred shekels of silver, probably coined money, and a wedge-shaped ornament or implement of gold, weighing some twenty-five ounces. These he had hidden away in a hole dug in the ground on which his tent stood, the precious metals being placed at the bottom and the garment at the top, and the whole covered with earth. Thus carefully Achan describes his theft and the pains which he had taken to conceal it. Messengers are at once despatched to the tent ; they find the articles in the position indicated, and bring them to Joshua and the chiefs, who solemnly lay them out before the ark, thus acknowledging the trespass, and restoring the devoted things to the Lord from whom they had been sacrilegiously purloined. One further act remained to be done ere atonement was complete. The offender must be put to death ; and not only he himself must suffer the penalty of his crime, but all that belonged to him ; the sentence was that his sons and his daughters, his oxen, asses, sheep, his tent and all his possessions, including the devoted articles for which he had incurred the sin, should be utterly destroyed. It was a terrible sentence. How is it to be reconciled with the well-known *dictum* : " The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the

fathers ; every man shall be put to death for his own sin ?" * On the other hand, Achan had wilfully incurred the ban, and he and his had become liable to the penalty imposed on communities thus accursed ; he had made his tent, as it were, a part of Jericho, and his family as the inhabitants of that devoted city, and he must be treated in accordance therewith. Whether his household was privy or not to his deed (and it is difficult to believe that he could have concealed it from those with whom he was living), they were involved in his guilt ; the solidarity of the family necessitated this. A sin has far-reaching consequences ; the sins of the fathers are indeed visited upon the children ; we see this in the law of heredity ; we see the same principle energizing in the constitution of societies, states, and nations ; the faults of leaders affect a wide circle of innocent sufferers. Nothing can tend better to bring home to men's minds the heinousness and corrupting nature of evil than the terrible truth that the punishment is not confined to the actual wrong-doer, but extends in a widening circle to victims guiltless and unknown. Achan's transgression was wilful and presumptuous ; he had robbed God ; he had thought to remain unconscited ; in the face of the recent displays of God's Almighty power, in spite of the holy covenant just renewed, he had, in his selfish greed and secret unbelief, brought the guilt of sacrilege upon the whole congregation, and imperilled the general safety. A stern example was needed. The conquest of Canaan was a holy war ; the treatment of the inhabitants and their property was regulated by Divine commands ; no base motives must mingle with the execution of the ordered vengeance ; and he who first introduced the elements of disobedience and self-interest into the accomplishment of the great design must experience a signal retribution. The awful sentence was duly carried out. Down the Wady Kelt marched a sorrowful procession bearing with them Achan, his family, and his possession, even all that he had, and having arrived at a spot where the execution could be most effectually witnessed by the awestruck congregation, the representatives of Israel stoned the victims to death, as those who were guilty of blasphemy, idolatry, or sabbath-breaking were put to death. The dead bodies were consumed with fire, and over the remains, as a lasting memorial of the sin and its

* Deut. xxiv. 16.

punishment, a great heap of stones was raised, and the pass henceforward was known as the “valley of Achan,” the “valley of him that troubleth”; even as Joshua says, dwelling with sad signification on the meaning of the name, “Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day.” Some critics, looking exclusively to the merciful provisions of the Law, and neglecting the considerations which have been urged above which involve a sterner view, have thought that the wife and children were taken only to witness the punishment of the criminal, were spectators only, and not victims. There is an ambiguity in the language which seems to favour this opinion. After mentioning that he, his family, and his possessions were brought down to the valley, it is said: “All Israel stoned *him* with stones,” and “they raised over *him* a great heap of stones.” But immediately afterwards we read: “They burned *them* with fire after they had stoned them;” and though these words have been supposed to refer not to the wife and children, but only to the sheep and cattle and other property, there are other reasons which make it certain that the members of his family perished with him. The use of the singular and plural in Hebrew is very indefinite,¹ and we cannot ground a statement upon any such expression unsupported by other evidence. But later on in the book we hear Joshua saying in reference to this impressive incident, “that man perished not alone in his iniquity” (chap. xxii. 20), where the point of the allusion consists in the fact that the consequences of his sin extended to others. And significantly enough in the genealogical list of 1 Chron. ii. 7 the line of Carmi ends with “Achar, the troubler of Israel,” who left no children to continue his family. The scene of this terrible occurrence was never forgotten; years afterwards the prophets referred to it, though under changed conditions and as conveying spiritual lessons. Isaiah (chap. lxv. 10) saw in it a place for herds to lie down in; and Hosea (chap. ii. 15) looked upon the Valley of Trouble as the door of hope. And such indeed it proved in the present case. The punishment put away the sin, and restored Israel to the Divine favour, gave them once more hope of effecting the conquest of the land.

The late events had left a feeling of despondency in Joshua’s heart, which was fully shared by the people. All were perplexed with the uncertainty that lay before them. What were they to

¹ “Pulp. Comm.” on Josh. vii. 25. Comp. Judg. xi. 17, 19; Psa. Ixvi. 9.

do? Would the Lord be with them? Might they hope for success in their next enterprise? This state of anxiety was quickly relieved. The voice of God roused Joshua from his dejection. Either by priestly message, or by some Divine intuition, he was bidden to take courage, and once more to attack Ai, and was assured that it should fall into his hands, with its king, its people, and the land appertaining to it. In this case the human beings were to be devoted to destruction, but the cattle and the spoil might be appropriated to the use of the captors. The new expedition was planned with much skill. In it was engaged a large proportion of the people, who were thus reassured after their late defeat by the employment of such a force as must crush all opposition. The attack was conducted by means of a stratagem; but the exact details are difficult to understand. The device employed was an ambuscade, combined with a simulated retreat and a sudden rally. This is plain enough; the perplexities commence when we endeavour to comprehend who composed the ambuscade, and where they were posted. We are first told that 30,000 men were sent to lie in ambush behind the city, and shortly afterwards we read that Joshua posted 5,000 troops in secret between Ai and Bethel. Though the ravines in the neighbourhood might easily conceal the latter number of soldiers, it is absurd to suppose that the larger force could have escaped the notice of the enemy; nor is it likely that he would have thought it necessary to lay two ambushes, one on the north-west and the other on the south-west of the city, and there is no appearance of the action of two such bodies in the subsequent engagement. So it is most probable that, as is so often the case in the Old Testament, there is a mistake in the reading of the numbers, and that for "30,000" we should read "5,000," which was the real amount of troops employed in the ambuscade. These were sent away by night up the Wady Suweinit as far as Michmash; and then turning up the great wady west of Ai, between that place and Bethel, they posted themselves in a ravine about a quarter of a mile from the city without having ever come in sight of it. By the time that morning dawned these dispositions were made. Joshua during the day despatched the main part of his forces to occupy a position on the north of Ai, above the deep and narrow bed of the Wady Mutyah, and he himself with a picked body of troops ascended the

gently sloping valley and appeared before the town on the open plain which stretches to the east and south.¹ Here they were discovered on the following morning by the King of Ai, who knew nothing of the ambush, nor of the largeness of the force concealed in the hills behind him. He saw a comparatively small detachment advancing to the attack, and supposing that he would defeat them as easily as on the former occasion, he boldly sallied out against them. Joshua had posted himself with his spear in hand on a knoll where he was clearly visible to his troops in their various dispositions, and was able to regulate their movements. By his direction the Hebrews offered no resistance to the assault of the Canaanites, but, as before, fled down the valley towards the Arabah, and drew their pursuers far away from the city. With exultant cries, as if the victory were already won, all the men of war flocked from the town, and followed the flying Hebrews ; the inhabitants of Bethel joined in the chase, so that both towns were left destitute of defenders. This was the moment to which Joshua had looked forward. He raised his spear with the pennon attached to it towards heaven. It was the signal agreed upon. The ambuscade rose from their concealment, hurried up the ravine, seized the defenceless city and set it on fire. At the sight of the smoke, which told them that the stratagem was successful, the Israelites suddenly turned upon their pursuers, the main body of troops showed themselves in the rear, and the Canaanites, thus placed between two armies, and seeing their city burning, were panic-stricken, could offer no effectual resistance, and were massacred to a man. The King of Ai himself was taken alive, and brought before the victorious général, who put him to death, and hung his dead body on a cross or gallows till eventide, when it was taken down and flung dishonoured at the gate of his late prosperous city, a huge heap of stones being raised over it. The city was utterly destroyed, so as to be a heap and a desolation for many a long day, the inhabitants to the number of twelve thousand, men and women, were put to the sword, and nothing was spared but the cattle and a certain portion of the spoil, which was the reward of the conquerors. Jericho, as the firstfruits

¹ Conder, "Quarterly Statement," April, 1874. It is strange that in spite of careful survey of the ground the site of Ai is not even yet accurately determined.

of victory in the land, had been wholly devoted to the Lord. It was not so with Ai ; and the appropriation of the enemies' possessions under certain restrictions was quite lawful. A site so favourable, however, was not allowed to remain unoccupied for ever. A city in the course of time arose on the ruins. The prophet, beholding in vision the Assyrian invader marching from the north on Jerusalem, sees him pass up the valley between Ai (Aiath) and Michmash ; and in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, among the number of those who returned from the Captivity are one or two hundred from Bethel and Ai, who doubtless retained a traditional knowledge of their old homes, and found buildings still standing in the locality.^{*} Whether Joshua took Bethel at this time is not stated. It is not likely that he would have left unsubdued a fortified city in his close vicinity, especially as the inhabitants had joined the people of Ai in their attack upon his forces. At the same time, as its fighting men had perished in the late encounter, he may have thought that its destruction was of no immediate consequence. That Bethel was captured with its king is expressly mentioned in the catalogue of conquests (chap. xii.) ; but the mode of its capture as detailed in the first chapter of Judges leads one to suspect that it was taken somewhat later in the war. The story as there told is this. Being a Hittite city it was not left long unoccupied, and the house of Joseph, *i.e.*, Ephraim, on the confines of whose territory it was situated (though actually allotted to Benjamin), determined to make themselves masters of the place. They came against it with a large force, and the Bethelites not daring to meet them in the open field confined themselves to their walls. The Hebrews refrained from a regular assault, having no ladders or engines prepared for such an attempt ; but they blockaded the place, carefully watching all the approaches, having, as it seems, a suspicion that there was an easier entrance to it than that which appeared. Their surmise proved to be correct. They found a man stealing out of the city without having passed the gate, and bribed him by the promise of safety to betray this secret entrance. By his means they surprised the city and put the inhabitants to the sword, sparing no one but the traitor and his family. Of the later history of Bethel and its degradation in the time of the

* Isaiah x. 28 ; Ezra ii. 28 ; Nehem. vii. 32.

kings of Israel, we have not now to speak—how the House of God became the House of idols.

“Where angels down the lucid stair
Came hovering to our sainted sires,
Now, in the twilight, glare
The heathen’s wizard fires.”*

* Keble, “Christian Year,” *Eighth Sunday after Trinity*.

CHAPTER V.

THE LAW SET UP IN CANAAN

Injunction of Moses ; its import—Pilgrimage to Shechem—Ebal and Gerizim, and the Vale of Shechem—The altar of unhewn stones erected—Inscription on stones—The blessing and the cursing.

In some of the last injunctions of Moses to the Israelites were included directions for the setting up of the Law in the heart of the country, as soon as circumstances permitted. The command, which was an evidence of perfect faith in God's promises, was as follows : “ It shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster ; and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law. . . . Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse, . . . and thou shalt set the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal. Are they not beyond Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites which dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh ? . . . And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones, . . . of unhewn stones ; and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto the Lord thy God ; and thou shalt sacrifice peace-offerings, and shalt eat there ; and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.”² It was evident that Moses desired that this injunction should be executed as soon as possible after the passage of Jordan. He thought it most important. Twice had he referred to its accomplishment, and pointed out the spot where the transaction was to take place. What, then, was

² Deut. xi. 26 ff. ; xxvii. 2 ff.

the significance of this unparalleled ceremony? No other people ever thus inaugurated its occupancy of a new country; the whole proceeding was abnormal and peculiar. By this religious act the Israelites took possession of Canaan in the name of the Lord. A sudden pause in the career of conquest is made in order to consecrate the land and the mode by which it was obtained. Henceforward the Law of the Lord was to be the principle by which the country was governed; this was set up in the most central position, solemnly proclaimed in the very heart of the transferred territory, in order that all men, contemporaries and posterity, might recognize the Divine intention in the conquest of Palestine, and the responsibilities which that possession involved—a law to obey, a curse to avoid. Here was Israel's strength; here was the guide which would lead them to complete victory; here were the conditions which would secure their national life.

Eager as Joshua was to execute the commands of his master, for which undertaking the way seemed to be marvellously opened, there were many difficulties to be considered before effecting the movement. It was not to be a mere military expedition; that would have been simple enough; but this was to be a national enterprise, the whole congregation was to take part therein; if the whole assembly was not actually present, a very large representative body—men, women, children, and strangers—was to behold the ceremony. Now from Gilgal to the appointed scene of the transaction, Shechem, was a distance of thirty miles, and this could not be traversed by such a company under two or three days. The pilgrimage would have to be accomplished in the midst of a hostile country, and might be molested by the enemy.¹ Doubtless

¹ Many critics have been so greatly influenced by the supposed difficulties connected with the performance of the ceremony at this early stage of the conquest, that they consider the account in chap. viii. 30-35 as an interpolation, introduced by a later editor to support the theory of an early date for Deuteronomy; or else as transposed from its proper place at the end of chap. xi., where it would naturally occur as a climax to the narrative of the complete occupation of the country, in which connection, indeed, Josephus ("Ant." v. 1. 19) places the transaction. In some MSS. of the Septuagint the paragraph is found after ix. 2. If, as the destructive critics say, the Book of Joshua has passed through the hands of many editors, it is strange that none of them should have noticed the difficulties which modern readers feel, and rectified the present arrangement. Is it

such reflections were presented to the leader's mind ; but they were counterbalanced by other considerations. There was little to be feared at this moment from any hostile attack. The complete destruction of Jericho and Ai had quelled all opposition in that immediate neighbourhood. The enemies now to be encountered lived far away to the south and north ; between them lay a district of wood and forest, thinly populated, and possessing no stronghold of importance. Gerizim was only twenty miles from Ai, and the road was now safe and unimpeded. Far from interfering with the Hebrews in the prosecution of their strange enterprise, the alarmed Canaanites would be probably more awestricken by these religious ceremonies performed by a people so evidently favoured by heavenly powers. And there was this further thought in Joshua's mind : it was his duty thus to dedicate the new kingdom ; and duty with him was always paramount. Whatever perils or difficulties lay in the path, his supreme faith in Jehovah would carry him through all in safety. So with no further misgiving he at once proceeded to execute the design so carefully sketched out by Moses.

As the coming ceremony was not only religious, but also, so to speak, educational, the entire community were engaged to take part in it. Accordingly a large contingent, consisting of members of every age and sex in the twelve tribes, civil and ecclesiastical, native-born, and strangers who had attached themselves to the chosen people, was conducted from the permanent camp at Gilgal to the previously appointed spot. This, as we have seen, was a locality in the vicinity of the mountains Ebal and Gerizim, already designated by Moses, in allusion to an incident in the life of Abraham, as "beside the oaks of Moreh."¹ To this sacred spot, where the city of Shechem stood, the congregation moved by easy stages. The city itself at this time was of small importance. It was inhabited by a tribe of Hivites, who had probably fled at the approach of the Hebrews, being unable to offer any effectual opposition. Here, in the loveliest scene of central Palestine, where Abraham built his first altar to the Lord in the Promised Land, where Jacob settled on his return from Padan-Aram and not more simple to suppose that the occurrence took place as stated in the text, and that the narrator saw no impossibility therein ?

¹ See "Abraham : His Life and Times," p. 31 f.

digged a well, which was and is still well known, where the same patriarch had bought a burying-place which his descendants were directed to use for the resting-place of Joseph's embalmed body, carried with them throughout their wanderings, here the host encamped in expectation of the solemn ceremonial. The valley where the tents were pitched runs east and west, having Mount Ebal on the north, which rises 3,076 feet above sea-level, and Gerizim on the south, at an elevation of 2,848 feet. The bases of these mountains are scarcely 500 yards apart in one place, but eastwards the valley opens into a much broader plain, beautifully watered and abundantly fertile. The summits of the two hills are nearly two miles distant from each other, Ebal rising stern and barren, Gerizim fruitful and picturesque, with the town of Shechem at its foot, the houses extending some way up the slope.

"Deep beneath the eye" [of a traveller advancing from the south], says Sir R. Temple,¹ "is a plain, green with the rising crops, and surrounded by hills. It looks like a lake in the bosom of the mountains. In these latitudes the crops are early, and at a distance seem to cover the ground with a carpet of tender verdure, although the winter season is not yet ended. This is the vale of Shechem, now called El Makhna. Conspicuous among the hills on the left, or western side, is Gerizim, a majestic mass of limestone, with stately head and precipitous sides. Ebal is the sister mount of Gerizim, but can hardly be seen at all from this point. Its top, however, can, by careful observation, be descried over the ridge of Gerizim. In our front, and a little beyond Gerizim, is the hill of Tirzah, and at its foot Shalem. . . . Beyond that, again, rises up a pyramid of snow, in the distance bounding the northern horizon. This is Hermon, which to the Jews of all generations has been the most conspicuous object in their national landscape. . . . The twin giants, Ebal and Gerizim, rise up majestically, the joint monarchs of the central ridge. They are joined together near their bases by a lower ridge of that form which geographers designate a saddle. On that saddle is situated the Turkish town of Nabalus, occupying the site of the historic Neapolis. . . . As the traveller advances closer and closer, both mountains loom forth grander and grander, their

¹ "Palestine Illustrated," pp. 156, 164.

rocky outlines being strongly marked against the sunset sky." Midway between the two mountains is found Joseph's tomb, standing within a rude enclosure. The interior, which is without any architectural adornment, is divided into two sections, the tomb being in the one furthest south. Here were buried the remains of Joseph, which had been carefully brought from Egypt and preserved amid the wanderings in the desert. It is not improbable that the patriarch's mummy might be found uninjured even to this day. About a third of a mile south of the tomb is Jacob's well, a site as authenticated as any in the land. A vaulted chamber has been erected over the well, which has helped to preserve its existence ; but it is becoming gradually choked with stones and rubbish. Sixty years ago Robinson found its depth to be 105 feet ; late travellers estimate it at only 35. Situated on the main road from Judæa to Samaria, and just at the spot where the requirements of the narrative place it, this well is undoubtedly the one on whose margin the Saviour sat while He discoursed with the woman of Samaria, and taught her whence to seek " living water."

Such was the locality where the Israelites assembled to carry out the great lawgiver's strange injunction.

The first act of the ceremony was the erection of an altar on Mount Ebal, and the offering of sacrifices thereon. The altar was to be of whole, unhewn stones, upon which no man had lifted tool of iron. Many reasons for this limitation have been assigned. Some of the Talmudists taught that it was intended to prevent the superstitious preservation of particles chipped from the stones consecrated to this use ; or for a mystic reason, *viz.*, that whereas the altar was used for the beatification and preservation of man's life, iron was employed to shorten and injure it, and was therefore excluded from holy rites and religious accessories. Others, again, see in it only the desire on the part of the lawgiver to differentiate Hebrew worship from that of heathen nations, who raised elaborate altars and adorned them with much art. The Jew was drawn to regard the spiritual view of the ceremony in which the altar was employed, and not to dwell upon the costliness or beauty of the material vehicle. Christian interpreters consider that thus was inculcated the lesson that in God's service all should be spontaneous, and that as little as possible of human devising should

be introduced therein ;¹ or that herein was adumbrated the transitoriness and imperfection of the Mosaic ritual ; or else was given an intimation that, as sacrifice is rendered necessary by man's earthly and carnal nature, earth is the fittest material for his altar, unhewn stone being the only substitute allowed. Whatever may have been the real reason of the command, Joshua strictly obeyed it, and raised an altar of unhewn stones on the summit of Mount Ebal, already probably a patriarchal holy place, and there offered burnt-offerings in propitiation and peace-offerings in thanksgiving, thus dedicating the people to the Lord and expressing their gratitude for the favour accorded to them. This important preliminary having been completed, the second part of the solemnity was taken in hand. This was in effect a renewal of the covenant on the entrance into the land of promise. The mode of this renewal was carefully prescribed, because by this was promulgated the great truth that it was by virtue of the law the people took possession of the country, and that they acknowledged themselves bound by this law, and were willing to show all due obedience. Hereupon certain stone pillars were set up, which were covered with a coating of plaster composed of lime or gypsum, and on this cement was written "a copy of the law of Moses." It is not necessary to suppose that the words were graven in the stones ; writings in plaster, under a climate such as that of Palestine, were naturally indestructible, and indeed have been found perfect after two thousand and more years. Some of these inscriptions are simply incised or indented in the plaster, others are filled in with coloured substance, red or black. "In this hot climate," says Dr. Thomson,² "where there is no frost to dissolve the cement, it will continue hard and unbroken for thousands of years, which is certainly long enough. That on Solomon's porch remains in admirable preservation, though exposed to all the vicissitudes of the climate, and with no protection. The cement in the tombs about Sidon is still perfect, and the writing on them entire, though acted upon by the moist, damp air always found in caverns, for perhaps two thousand years. What Joshua did, therefore, when he erected those great stones at Mount Ebal, was merely to write in the still soft cement with a stile, or, more likely, on the polished surface, when dry, with ink or paint, as seen in ancient tombs.

¹ So "Pulpit Comm." *in loc.*

² "Central Palestine," 140.

Properly sheltered, and not broken off by violence, the cement would have remained to this day." In Egypt the Israelites had seen not merely monumental stones, but the whole walls of temples thus adorned; and there were doubtless many skilful workmen among them who could copy the words committed to them by Joshua and the priests. It is, however, difficult to decide what was actually inscribed on the memorial. The words in the text are: "a copy of the law of Moses which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel." The first part of the sentence is literally "the doubling of the law of Moses," "Deuteronomium legis Moysi," as the Latin Vulgate has it (with which the Septuagint agrees). This is equivalent to our term "duplicate," and implies the copy of a document. And "which he wrote" must mean that Joshua inscribed this "law" in the sight of the assembled Israelites. It seems impossible to suppose that the whole of Deuteronomy was here written; neither time nor space could have been afforded for so lengthy a document; still less could the whole law have been set forth with all its enactments, narratives, genealogies, &c. On the other hand, if the Decalogue alone were meant, these "great stones" (Deut. xxvii. 2) would not have been required. Nor must the term be restricted to the blessings and cursings which were at this time solemnly announced; these could not have been designated by Moses as "all the words of this law." What is meant by the expression is the strictly legislative portion of the Law, which, according to the Jews, amounted to six hundred and thirteen enactments. These were impressed on the monumental stones, perhaps at the conclusion of the ceremony, and thus the Israelites were perpetually reminded of the tenure by which they held the land of promise, the conditions on which depended their national prosperity and existence.

And now the third and most impressive scene of the great solemnity was enacted. In the centre of the valley between Ebal and Gerizim was placed the ark with its company of priests and Levites, surrounded by the elders, officers, and judges. The visible token of the presence of God hallowed the whole ceremonial, and every detail was performed as in the sight of the Most High. Outside the circle formed by the ecclesiastical and civil chiefs was gathered the multitude, consisting of the people who had made the pilgrimage from

Gilgal in order to take part in this solemnity. These were divided into two bodies ; the tribes that sprung from the two wives of Jacob, viz., Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin, stood at the base and up the slope of Gerizim, while on Ebal were gathered those descended from the handmaids Zilpah and Bilhab, viz., Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali, to which were added, in order to make the number equal, Reuben, who by his crime had forfeited the right of primogeniture, and Zebulun, the youngest son of Leah. "Joseph" of course connotes the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and "Levi" here takes its place with the others, though generally and for secular purposes it has no part with its brethren. At the water-parting near the eastern end of the vale there is a natural amphitheatre formed by recesses in the two mountains exactly facing one another, and where, curiously enough, "the limestone strata, running up to the very summits in a succession of ledges, present the appearance of a series of regular benches." There is no place in all Palestine better suited for the orderly assembly of an immense body of men so arranged that all could see the proceedings, and, within the limits reached by a human voice, hear what was said. It must have reminded Joshua of that revered locality in Sinai hallowed by the giving of the Law. When all was arranged, Joshua and the priests standing in the centre of the valley recited the Law of Moses, ending with twelve curses and twelve blessings, to the former of which the people assembled on Ebal responded "Amen," and to the latter those on Gerizim. We may observe that the group on Gerizim far exceeded the others in number and importance, as if to indicate that in the end the blessing should prevail.¹ That such a proceeding was quite feasible is evident. The acoustic properties of the valley of Shechem have been tested by modern travellers, who, when standing on one of the mountains, have found no difficulty in hearing words spoken on the other ; and Canon Tristram records that, during his travels in the Holy Land, two of his party stationing themselves on the opposite mountains recited the ten commandments antiphonally, and heard each other most distinctly. The twelve curses are given in full, and are all concerned with special breaches of

¹ "Speaker's Commentary," Deut. xxvii. 12. "Quarterly Statement," 1873, p. 67.

the commandments, except the last, which is conceived in general terms condemning every infringement of the law. Members of the English Church are familiarized with this formulary by the use of the Commination Service on Ash-Wednesday, which is framed after this ordinance. Each curse was followed by its corresponding blessing, the responsive "Amen" testifying the utterers' conviction of the truth, justice, and certainty of the sentences, and their desire and willingness to abide by them. The particular subjects dealt with in the imprecations were idolatry, dishonouring of parents, removal of landmarks, inhumanity, unnatural crimes, murder ; the blessings are not specified in the account of the ceremony, but we may gather their nature from the corresponding passage in Deuteronomy (chap. xxviii.), where blessings are promised on city and field, on man and cattle, on the basket and the kneading-trough, on going out and coming in, on contest with enemies, on relations with foreign peoples. Here was a sketch of the working of the Divine law and of the moral government of God. The Hebrews needed promises and threats to keep them true to their allegiance ; the old law had its rewards and its punishments, and both must be plainly set forth for the guidance of the theocratic people.

CHAPTER VI.

CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH.

Gibeon and its confederate cities, Beeroth, Kirjath-jearim, and Chephirah—Stratagem of the Gibeonites; its success; their destiny—Five kings combine to attack Gibeon—Jerusalem—Jarmuth—Joshua marches to relieve Gibeon—Battle of Beth-horon—Hailstorm—The daylight lengthened—The miracle considered—Defeat of the Canaanites—Azekah; Makkedah—Humiliation and execution of the kings—The southern campaign—Conquest of Makkedah; Libnah; Lachish; Gezer; Eglon; Hebron; Debir—The Hills—The Negeb—The Shephelah—The Slopes—Kadesh-barnea—Goshen—The dispossession only partial.

AT the conclusion of the ceremonies narrated in the last chapter, which took some days to accomplish, Joshua led back his forces and the assembled host to the permanent camp at Gilgal, intending thence to set out on a new campaign. Some critics, expatiating on the difficulty of moving this large mass of people backwards and forwards, have thought that at this time the headquarters were moved from the Jordan Valley to another place named Gilgal, situated near the oaks of Moreh, a few miles north of Bethel, and still known by the name of Jiljilia. This would indeed have been a central situation, and, as far as we know, a favourable post from which to direct future operations. Whether it was as fitted as the lower plains for the support of the mixed congregation with its numerous flocks and herds may reasonably be doubted. And there are two considerations fatal to the conjecture. First, the narrator, if he was aware of this change of position, would not have constantly referred to “the camp at Gilgal,” knowing that his readers must necessarily believe that the original encampment in the Arabah was meant; and secondly, in the account of

subsequent operations we read: "Joshua ascended from Gilgal, . . . went up from Gilgal all night." This could not be said of a march from Jiljilia to Gibeon, while it is exactly suitable to a movement from the low-lying Jordan Valley to the mountainous region wherein Gibeon was situated. While Joshua tarried a few days at Gilgal, an event occurred which had momentous consequences.

Six or seven miles south of Bethel, and about five north-west of Jerusalem, stood the city of Gibeon, on a lower eminence at the northern slope of the lofty mountain Mizpeh or Nehy Samwil. This hill, so named from an erroneous Mussulman tradition that herein lie buried the remains of the great prophet Samuel, is a remarkable feature in the landscape, standing at the head of the pass of Beth-horon, and from its high elevation, 2,647 feet above sea level, commanding a most extensive prospect, which embraces Joppa and the western plain and the Mediterranean Sea on one side, and on the other Jerusalem, Olivet, and the distant Moabite hills beyond the Jordan and the Dead Sea. Gibeon, identified with the modern village El-Jib, is placed on an oblong ridge composed of limestone rock, rising, as it were, in steps out of the plain, in many places difficult of access, and capable of being everywhere very strongly fortified.¹ Its position on the great highway from the sea-board into the interior, and commanding the chief pass over the mountain, has tended to maintain its existence and celebrity unto the present day. Immediately in front stretched a tract of fertile ground, producing not only abundant crops of grain, but likewise olives, grapes, figs, and other fruits. At this time it was a place of vast importance; it is described as "a great city, as one of the royal cities, greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty." It was, in fact, the chief of four confederate cities occupied by Hivites, who were not governed by a king, but formed a kind of republic under certain elected elders, and thus enjoyed a constitution similar to that of the free towns of Germany. The inhabitants are said in 2 Sam. xxi. 2 to have been of Amorite extraction; but the name Amorite is often used loosely as a designation of any Canaanite tribe. The other towns of the confederacy were Beeroth, Kirath-jearim, and Chephirah, the situations of which are well

¹ Stanley "Sinai and Palestine," 214 f.; Robinson, "Researches," ii. 135 ff.; Thomson, "Central Palestine," 70.

known. Beeroth ("wells") is now called Bireh. It stands on a ridge running from west to east on the road leading north from Jerusalem, from which it is distant about nine miles, being two short of Bethel. As the first halting-place of caravans travelling towards Galilee, it has been supposed to be the place whence Mary and Joseph turned back to Jerusalem on discovering that Jesus was not in their company. From its elevated position it is visible at a great distance both from the north and south, the ridge on which it stands bounding the prospect as seen from Jerusalem and its neighbourhood.¹ It is now a village of seven hundred inhabitants, but the ruins in its vicinity afford proof that it was once of much more extensive dimensions and fortified by strong walls. Kirjath-jearim ("the city of woods") was a place of great antiquity, and had been taken by the Hivites from the original inhabitants, who had named it Baalah. Its later name was derived from the plantations of figs and olives, and the thick undergrowth that covered every vacant spot. It stood on a hill south-west of Gibeon, and has been identified with Khurbet Erma, where are seen extensive ruins and a scarped area which may well have been the place where the ark rested those many years after it was restored by the Philistines till David "found it in the wood."² "It is," says Dr. Geikie,³ "about four miles nearly east of Bethshemesh, but a thousand feet higher above the sea. Approaching it from the east, by the great gorge which, under different names, runs from near Gibeon to Bethshemesh, and ascending the slopes on which is the little ruined village of Deir-esh-Sheikh, you see the white bed of a torrent far beneath, twisting in wide bends beneath steep hills, which rise fully a thousand feet above it. The slopes on both sides are stony and seamed with outcrops of rock, and both, but especially the southern, are covered with a dense brushwood of dwarfed oak, hawthorn, carob, and other trees, no higher than well-grown shrubs; every vacant space adding to the pleasantness of the view by a carpet of thyme, sage, and other aromatic plants. On a bold spur running out from the southern slope, and marked by a curious platform of rock which rises in the centre, above the olive trees around, lie the ruins of Erma, built up against scarps, natural or artificial." The fourth city,

¹ Robinson, ii. 130.

² See "Samuel and Saul," pp. 56 f.

³ "The Holy Land and the Bible," ii. 144.

Chephirah, now known as Keïreh, lay some four miles from Kirjath-jearim, and two east from the town of Ajalon, of which we shall shortly hear again. To the same confederacy belonged also Shechem. Situated as these cities were, commanding the passes which led to the sea coast and the south, they formed a most important element in the conquest, though at the time Joshua seems to have failed to understand their position, and might have suffered severely for his ignorance. Providentially he was spared from this danger by a most unexpected event. Thoroughly alarmed by the destruction of Jericho and Ai, which in their view had been effected by stratagem and craft, the burghers resolved to secure by wily diplomacy that safety which they had no heart to attempt by an appeal to arms. The petty Canaanite kings, who had been slow to realize the marvellous character of late events, had now become alive to the danger that menaced them, and were combining to make common cause against the invaders. They invited the Gibeonites to join their league. But these stood aloof, and determined to make terms for themselves. They knew too well the fate that awaited them at the hands of the Hebrews; they were quite aware that a war of extermination had been declared against the inhabitants of the land, that no truce could be expected, and that to confess themselves Canaanites of the neighbourhood was to consign their lives to destruction. So, reckoning on the simplicity and credulity of the Israelites and their ignorance of the natives of the country, they sent an embassy to Joshua, at Gilgal, representing themselves as having come from a far country, attracted by the fame of the Jewish conquests on the eastern side of Jordan, and desirous of making a league with a people so plainly under Divine protection. They mention especially that they had heard of the power displayed by the Lord their God in Egypt, and how the Israelites had conquered Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan. All reference to more recent events, the passage of the Jordan, the destruction of Jericho and Ai, is cunningly omitted, the better to support the fiction of their distant home. Disposed though they were to believe in the profound and wide impression made by the wonders which they had experienced, the Israelites did not at once fall into the trap prepared for them. Something in the appearance or language of these strangers led them to suspect that they might

be Canaanites. "Peradventure," said they, "ye dwell among us ; and how shall we make a league with you ?" All such alliances, indeed, had been strictly forbidden on the ground of the polluting influence of evil practices and example, especially in the matter of idolatry and debasement of morals.² The Gibeonites were prepared for this difficulty, and on Joshua asking them to say plainly who they were, and whence they came, they made no direct answer, but asserted that they had journeyed from a far distant country ; and in proof of their statement they pointed to the condition of their garments and provisions. The clothes were new when they started from home, and now were worn threadbare ; their sandals had been patched again and again ; the sacks in which they carried their food were worn out ; the leathern skins which held wine were burst with long use, and roughly mended ; the bread which they had taken fresh from the oven was dry and mouldy. All these tokens of hard travel they had craftily prepared beforehand to deceive the unsuspecting Israelites. Naturally ambassadors would appear in bright and festive attire ; the condition of these envoys could be explained only on the plea of their having come straight from a distant journey. Of mouldy victuals and worn-out garments the Hebrews had had no experience during their sojourn in the wilderness ; they looked with wonder on these foreigners, and accepted their story without reserve. That they could be the victims of an elaborate fraud never crossed their mind. The elders took of the food which the Gibeonites offered, and thus, in accordance with Eastern custom, pledged themselves to peace and friendship. Without asking counsel of God, trusting entirely to his own judgment, Joshua made a league with these deceivers ; with culpable carelessness the princes ratified the alliance by an oath. The national pride was gratified by the arrival of this deputation ; here was a tribute to the reputation and the power of God's chosen people ; the evidence seemed incontestable ; and thus the engagement was rashly made which had such momentous consequences.

Three days passed, and then the deception was discovered. It was found that these supposed travellers lived in cities not twenty miles away from the camp. Determined to examine the truth for himself, Joshua organized an expedition into the

² Exod. xxiii. 32 f. ; xxxiv. 12. Deut. vii. 1 ff.

hill country, and soon arrived at Gibeon and its allied cities. They were plainly inhabited by the hated Canaanites, who by law were devoted to utter destruction. The soldiers were eager to execute the vengeance of which they believed themselves to be the appointed instruments. But the chieftains restrained the ardour of their followers ; they had sworn with an oath to preserve the lives of these Gibeonites, and they could not violate the engagement. There was much to be said on both sides. The people argued that the command regarding the extermination of the Palestinians was simple, severe, and admitted of no compromise ; that immunity had been obtained by a palpable fraud, and was therefore not to be observed ; or that the engagement, not having been made with the concurrence of the whole congregation, was null and void. On the other hand, the elders replied that they had voluntarily sworn by the Lord to spare this people, and that though they were doubtless guilty of carelessness in making the promise, they could not take advantage of this negligence to repudiate the obligation and bring disgrace on the sacred name which they had invoked. What was the duty in this conflict of opinions ? Were they to observe the covenant into which they had been unwarily entrapped, or to act as if no such engagement existed ? It is not immoral to violate a vow which it would be a sin to keep. No casuist would have condemned Herod had he refused to execute John the Baptist in compliance with the oath which he had imprudently taken. But was it a sin to spare the Gibeonites ? We must remember that the destruction of the Canaanites was ordered lest they should seduce the Hebrews to idolatry. If in a special case this end could be secured without wholesale annihilation, the stern command might perhaps be allowed to be temporarily suspended, more especially as its execution under present circumstances would have brought upon themselves the guilt of perjury, and given occasion to the heathen to blaspheme and lightly regard the name of Jehovah by which the oath had been taken. The elders were not long in deciding their course of action. They determined to stand by their oath, and at the same time to place the Gibeonites in such a position that they would be unable to influence others to evil, and that the design of God in decreeing their destruction might still virtually be carried out. Accordingly they granted these Canaanites their lives, but reduced them to a servile condition,

made them "hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation." These menial duties, which usually fell to the lowest classes, they had henceforward to perform especially in the sanctuary and for the service of the priests. Joshua announced this decision in stern language : " Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you ; when ye dwell among us ? Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall never fail to be of you bondmen, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." The Israelites do not seem to have been influenced by any idea of making converts of this people. They were very slow to recognize their own missionary character, or to extend the privileges of their religion to alien nations. Nor do the Gibeonites appear to have been actuated by any motive but slavish fear in making the submission. Their assertion of regard for the name and power of Jebovah was a hollow pretence ; they had none of the honest conviction which Rahab displayed ; and their chicanery and deceit were justly punished. To this sentence the Gibeonites submitted without resistance, and accepting the position forced upon them, seem never to have acted treacherously or to have seduced their masters to idolatry. The results showed that the princes had acted rightly. The compact led to a great and notable victory a few days later ; and the infringement of the covenant by Saul was regarded by God as a national crime, and punished by a general famine in the land.

We have mentioned that the Canaanite kings of the south were uniting their forces in order to crush the invaders. They are described as those in the hill country, in the lowland, and the shore of the Great Sea, the three terms applying respectively to the mountainous region in central and southern Palestine, the Shephelah, *i.e.*, the plain between the hills and the coast, and the sea coast itself extending from Tyre to Joppa. The defection of Gibeon, with its powerful army and commanding position, opened the approaches to their territory and gave the strangers a hold on the very heart of the country. The northern tribes, though equally alarmed, were not prepared to take immediate steps, and were indeed completely isolated from the southern confederacy by Joshua's strategical manœuvre. Six of the seven nations of Canaan are named as joining in the league, the Gergashites being omitted, probably as being cut off by their position from effecting a junction with

their southern brethren. We have no criteria by which to judge of the number of the troops actually engaged in the conflict. The tribes located in the mountains doubtless sent all their available strength, while those at a distance forwarded powerful contingents ; but there was little coherence in the army thus collected, and its military organization was very defective. The tribe which is mentioned as especially engaged in the present conflict is called loosely that of the Amorites, led by Adoni-zedec, king of Jerusalem, and supported by the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. The appellation of the king of Jerusalem signifies "Lord of righteousness," and recalls the monarch of Abraham's day, Melchizedek, "king of righteousness." Such was probably the official title of the king of Jerusalem, though doubtless, on a change of dynasties, the name had long ago lost its appositeness, and could not be appropriately applied to the idolatrous heathen who bore it. There seems no reason to doubt that the city so named is to all intents the Jerusalem of sacred history. The word in Hebrew, *Jerushalaim*, is of dual form, implying an aggregation, or, as we may say, an upper and a lower city. There are numerous similar plural names of cities in Scripture, and every one is familiar with classical instances, as *Thebæ*, *Athenæ*, *Mycenæ*. This city also bore the name of *Jebus*, and its inhabitants were called *Jebusites*, and retained possession of the place up to the time of David. This uninterrupted occupancy was attributable to its strong position, which Hebrew skill could not force ; nor do we read of any attempt made by Joshua to effect its capture when he so rapidly and easily subdued the other allied towns. Of three of the remaining cities we shall hear again shortly, but of one of them, Jarmuth, very little is said. It is mentioned among the cities of Judah in chap. xv., and in Nehemiah xi., but occurs nowhere else in the pages of Scripture, save in connection with the circumstances of this league. It has been identified with the village of *Yarmuk*, which stands on the crest of a rugged hill about eight miles north-east of *Eleutheropolis*, and, as Dr. Porter says, in the hewn stones and ruins that mark the site gives token of past strength and greatness.* These five kings determined to make a combined effort to punish *Gibeon* for its treachery, and to recover a position of such vast strategic importance. They do not venture to attack Joshua,

* Kitto, "Cyclop." ; Robinson, ii. 344.

of whose divinely-protected power they stood in great awe, but they hope to be able to cut off the revolting city, and thus deprive him of a formidable ally. Gathering their forces together, they suddenly marched upon Gibeon and "made war against it." The Gibeonites hardly realized the details of the confederacy which was gathered for their destruction ; in their alarm they stop not to examine accurately the quarter whence the storm burst upon them ; their only hope of safety lies in immediate succour at the hands of Joshua. They send an urgent message to the camp at Gilgal, stating that all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains were gathered against them, though in reality the hostile forces were chiefly inhabitants of the lowlands — fear making them blind and inaccurate ; and with pressing importunity they add : " Slack not thy hand from thy servants ; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us." The crisis was urgent. Joshua saw at once that celerity was of the utmost importance. Not a moment did he hesitate. Secure in the protection of heaven, (for he had had an assurance that the Lord was with him and would give him victory), he selected the most valiant of his soldiers, and set out with a brave heart to encounter the largest body of the enemy that he had yet engaged. The distance from Gilgal to Gibeon was some fifteen miles ; marching all night up the Wady Kelt, and through the Wady Suweinit, he arrived in the early morning in the neighbourhood of the city before the Amorites were aware that he had quitted his camp. The battle that ensued has been called one of the decisive battles of the world. Stanley¹ compares it with "the battle of the Milvian Bridge, which involved the fall of Paganism ; the battle of Poitiers, which sealed the fall of Arianism ; the battle of Bedr, which secured the rise of Mahometanism in Asia ; the battle of Tours, which checked the spread of Mahometanism in Western Europe ; the battle of Lepanto, which checked it in Eastern Europe ; the battle of Lutzen, which determined the balance of power between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Germany." Deploying suddenly from the defile into the more open ground in front of Gibeon, the Israelites struck the Amorites with dismay. Such prompt action was quite unexpected ; the remembrance of the terrible massacres of Jericho and Ai was present to their minds ; the bearing of these

¹ "Jewish Church," lect. xi.

strangers was bold, as if assured of victory ; and as they shouted their confident war-cry, "God is mighty in battle : God is His name," the Amorites were stricken with panic, and offered but slight resistance to the furious attack of the Hebrews. They were completely discomfited, and fled in confusion through the defiles trending westward, on the hilly road broken by many a steep ascent and descent that led to Beth-horon, some five or six miles distant. The name Beth-horon means "house of caves." There were two places so called, an Upper and a Lower Beth-horon, the latter lying seven hundred feet lower than the other at two miles' distance. The sites have been easily identified by the unalterable features of the country, and the very names have remained unchanged in these three or four thousand years, the Upper being now known as Beit Ur el Foka, the Lower as Beit Ur el Tachta. While part of the defeated forces fled to Beth-horon, another portion hurried down the Wady Surar or Sorek to their fortified cities, which lay to the south and west. The interest of the narrative is concentrated on the former of the two bodies of fugitives. These reached the head of the pass of Upper Beth-horon before their pursuers, and, surmounting the height, set off down the slope that led to the Lower village. This was a most rugged and difficult descent, encumbered with loose stones and outstanding rocks, and in some places so steep that steps have been rudely cut to facilitate progress. As the discomfited enemy flung themselves down this precipitous pass, another disaster befell them. One of those furious storms of hail, accompanied with lightning, which at times sweep over the hills of Palestine, burst upon the flying troops. Hailstones of enormous size fell from heaven, and caused wide destruction, so that the narrator could say : "They were more which died with the hailstones, than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." Such an occurrence is no exaggeration. We have seen in our own country, and only a few years ago, hailstones of great size ; in tropical climates the fall of masses of ice of a pound or more in weight is not uncommon, and these would naturally disable or kill any men or animals which they might strike. Kitto¹ mentions a storm at Constantinople in 1831, when the hail was such that roofs were beaten in, trees stripped and broken, and many persons slain, and much cattle killed.

¹ "Bible Illustrations," ii. 293.

The fact concerned with the story of "The Thundering Legion," however adorned by ecclesiastical tradition, remains irrefragable, viz., that the Roman army was delivered from a most critical position by a sudden storm, which supplied them with the water for which they were thirsting, and discomfited their barbarian opponents. Such a tempest completed the rout of the Austrians at the battle of Solferino in 1859. The providential occurrence of this hailstorm in the pass of Beth-horon, while it encouraged the Israelites in their belief that the Lord interposed in their behalf, increased the panic of the Amorites, and confirmed their conviction of the impossibility of contending successfully against a people so manifestly protected by heavenly powers. When he arrived at the head of the pass, Joshua paused a few minutes to examine the scene and to rest his panting followers. Behind him rose the lofty hills which concealed Gibeon from his view, while over them the sun shone with all its power high in the heavens ; before him the prospect extended over the rounded hills beneath, over the broad plain of Ajalon at the further extremity of the defile, and to the blue waters of the sea in the far distance, a rift in the clouds showing the pale disc of the moon in the western sky. But below he looked on the discomfited enemy, rushing tumultuously down the steep track, thrown into the wildest confusion, and suffering all the horrors of a tropical storm of abnormal violence. Here was victory in his grasp, if only he could seize it. Would daylight last long enough, he could annihilate the Amorites ere they reached a refuge in the plain. The great exertions which he had made would surely not be rendered useless by the approach of night. Forbid it, Lord ! The wish of his heart found expression in words preserved in the Book of Jasher, to which we are indebted also for David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan.² The following is the quotation, partly prose, partly poetry : "Then spake Joshua to Jehovah in the day when Jehovah delivered up the Amorite before the sons of Israel ; and he said before the eyes of Israel—

" Sun, be still [silent] upon Gibeon,
And, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon !
And the sun was still, and the moon stayed,
Until the nation was avenged of its enemies.

* 2 Sam. i. 18 ff.

Is not this written in the Book of Jasher? And the sun stood in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before and after it, that Jehovah hearkened unto the voice of a man; for Jehovah fought for Israel."* The rhythmical portion of the quotation is doubtless taken from the Book of Jasher; the prose part is cited from another account which comments on the former, and has been here inserted by an editor who took the popular view of the transaction. The apparent meaning of this paragraph is that the day was miraculously prolonged in order to give the Israelites time to complete the destruction of the Canaanites before the darkness of night should put a stop to their operations. This seems to be simply the statement in the text; and it is met by many objections, not only on the part of sceptics who disbelieve in the miraculous, but also on the part of believers who find insuperable difficulties in regarding the occurrence as strictly historical. It is considered as a great waste of power to work so tremendous a miracle for so small a result as the destruction of this insignificant body of men. The Bible, speaking the language of common life, not of scientific accuracy, must mean by the staying of the sun that the diurnal motion of the earth was suddenly arrested. To prevent the appalling consequences of such an occurrence many more miracles must have been needed. Was the occasion such as to warrant them? We may say at once that if the necessity for such a miracle is granted, the details are comparatively unimportant. If God, for wise purposes, thought fit to suspend or control the laws of the universe in this special instance, He would also control the consequences which would otherwise naturally result from such interference. And it may be said that a miracle at this crisis was demanded and was to be expected. It was imperative that the league of the Canaanite kings should be broken up and their power destroyed; it was also imperative that this destruction should be effected on this day; if a miracle was needed to bring about this result, He who had already worked so many wonders for Israel, He who had shown that all nature is subservient to the scheme of redemption, might well miraculously prolong this day to facilitate the accomplishment of His purpose. Persons may think

* The concluding paragraph, ver. 15, "And Joshua returned," &c., is part of the quotation from Jasher, the intermediate events being omitted.

that this stopping of the earth's rotation (which is the virtual explanation of the miracle) was an unnecessary display of Almighty power, that victory might have been given by other and simpler means, that the occasion did not warrant such an exaggerated effort of Omnipotence ; but we are not competent judges of the acts and determinations of God ; there are no degrees of difficulty with Him ; one method is as easy with Him as another. If He answered Joshua's prayer to the letter, it was because such an intervention was best calculated to effect the intended result, and to demonstrate to heathens and believers alike that the battle was the Lord's, and that man's destiny was wholly in His hands. The inspired leader of Israel might well have expected to receive the supernatural aid in his present undertaking which he had experienced on former occasions. It was necessary to strike terror into the heathen nations around, and to show that the very gods whom they worshipped were powerless before the Lord of the Israelites. Thus such a miraculous interference as that supposed would have a strong moral effect upon both belligerents, encouraging the one and terrifying the other. Besides this, on this conflict hung momentous issues. It was no mere engagement of petty tribes struggling for the possession of a remote corner of an insignificant country ; Israel was fighting for truth, morality, religion, progress, against error, licentiousness, idolatry, barbarism ; the future of man was concerned in this battle of Beth-horon. Were piety and purity to win the day, or blasphemy and depravity ? Was the grand truth of Monotheism to be triumphantly vindicated, or Polytheism with its unspeakable pollutions to be victorious ? Here, if ever, would God bare His arm ; here, if man's necessity needed miraculous aid, would such intervention be vouchsafed. If in Israel all nations should be blessed, and its very existence was imperilled by the present contingency, a miracle might be expected to occur, in order to obviate the latter danger, and to help forward the designed result. Thus there is no antecedent improbability in the record of the miracle as usually understood ; there was reason for Divine interposition, if the natural order of things would have failed to accomplish the purpose. We might be content to leave the matter here, acquiescing in the literal statement of the wonder, and waiting patiently for its further elucidation. But scoffers and unbelievers have

made so much of the difficulties connected with the occurrence that a few more words are necessary. We may take Renan's¹ version of the story as the best example of the modern gloss : "The Israelite army marched in a body to force the five kings to raise the siege of Gibeon. A panic seized on the Canaanite army ; it fled towards Bethorah as far as Maggeda. Joshua pursued it, cut it in pieces, killed, it is said, the five kings and crucified them. A popular song (preserved in the *Jasher*) celebrated this victory ; in it were found these two lines :

" ' Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,
And thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.'

The poet wished to express the astonishment of nature at the prodigious efforts of the Israelites. This rhetorical figure afterwards gave rise to some curious mistakes. The two lines were placed in the mouth of Joshua, and in changing the meaning of the word, which signifies 'stood still with astonishment,' it was supposed that the sun really stood still at the order of Joshua." Thus the miracle is eliminated from the narrative. There are two questions here which may well be asked even by believers in the supernatural : Was the supposed miracle absolutely necessary ? And do the words of the account in Scripture compel us to maintain the literal meaning of the passage and no other ? Now God never varies what we have learned to call the laws of nature without sufficient cause ; in certain cases He interposes His will, as a man may arrest the attraction of gravity by superior force ; but this He does only when He sees that the ordinary course of things will not effect His purpose. Miracles are supplied only where they are needed by the weakness of the recipient or the inability of the ordinary agent. Granted that longer daylight was needed to enable the Hebrews to make their victory complete, this result might have been obtained by something short of the tremendous wonder narrated by the compiler. An extraordinary refraction of the sunlight—a parhelion, or some similar natural phenomenon—might have produced the desired prolongation. There was no necessity for any great extension of the day. An hour or two more was all that was needed. After the night march, and the morning fight, and the rapid pursuit up the difficult pass, the Israelites must have found themselves quite exhausted at

¹ "History of the People of Israel," p. 204, Eng. Translation.

the end of an ordinary day ; human nature could not have endured another twelve hours of such violent exertions, and it would have required a fresh miracle to enable them to take advantage of the added time. But are we bound to regard the account in sober earnest as the statement of a fact in history ? Or have we grounds for supposing that Eastern hyperbole and poetic adornment have modified the simple truth ?

If the miracle is plainly related in the Book of Joshua, it would surely have been referred to by succeeding writers ; it would have entered into the strains of Psalmists and Prophets, as the wonders of the Exodus are sung ; it would have been enumerated by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews among the mighty deeds of Joshua and the Judges ; it would have appeared in Isaiah's prophecy when he spoke of the battle of Gibeon ;¹ but there is no allusion whatever to it in all canonical Scripture. The passage in Habakkuk iii. 11, which has been supposed to bear upon it, has really nothing to do with it. The words are translated in our version : "The sun and moon stood still in their habitation" ; but the expression means, "withdraw into their habitation," *i.e.*, retire in fear and horror, and is part of a general description of the effects of the great Theophany. The miracle is mentioned only in the Apocrypha, the writer of Ecclesiasticus speaking of it thus : "Did not the sun go back by his means ? And was not one day as long as two ?" (Ecclus. xlvi. 4). The son of Sirach has altered the tradition which was given in the Book of Jasher, and represents the sun as going back instead of standing still. This shows that the story was handed down vaguely, and was not based on a definite statement in inspired Scripture. Josephus' account is the following :² "There also Joshua understood that God was present to help him, signifying His aid by thunders and lightning, and showers of hailstones greater than usual. Besides these things the day was lengthened, lest the courage of the Hebrews should be restrained by the approach of night. . . . Now that the length of the day was increased at that time, and prolonged beyond its customary measure, is made evident by the documents laid up in the temple." The wonder here is minimized, and the bare fact stated that on this occasion the day was lengthened ; the means and the mode are entirely omitted ; nor can it be proved that the Jewish writer had before him the

¹ Heb. xi. 30 ff. ; Isa. xxviii. 21.

² "Ant." v. 1. 17.

same text which is found in our Hebrew Bible. The reference to the documents kept in the temple is calculated to impress the minds of those for whose edification Josephus wrote his histories, but it was impossible for them to verify the allusion, as it is for us in these days. A retardation of the earth's diurnal motion would have disarranged the astronomical calculations of observers in every part of the world ; but no record of any such disturbance has been found. So if one should argue that the miracle did not take place in the manner stated by the present text, he could not be refuted by any evidence at present available. Curiously enough, the annals of Assurbanipal afford a parallel miracle, which, as asserted to be caused by a heathen god and in furtherance of the action of a bloody despot, we must regard as fictitious. The words of the document are thus translated by Mr. George Smith :^x "The darkness of the morning watch he caused to retard the rising sun ; and like this also three days he caused to retard ; to the end that the King of Elam shall be destroyed." . . . If this sober inscription is exaggeration or poetic imagery, why should not the extract from the Book of Jasher and the comment thereon be regarded as the poetical and rhetorical setting of some more simple occurrence ? It may be that Joshua never did utter the apostrophe put into his mouth by the bard who sung of his prowess ; the narrator or a later editor inserted the extract in his account ; a glosser, rightly imbued with the truth that miraculous intervention was to be expected in this conjuncture, added the prose comment in the margin, which in the course of time crept into the text. Looking to the marvellous results of the victory, and the superhuman exertions by which it was achieved, the Israelites may well have regarded the events of that one day as equivalent to the work of two, and thus in course of time it came to be believed in current tradition that the day was prolonged to twice its usual length, though Scripture itself nowhere supported the statement. The simple fact may have been that, seeing the tempest driving up from the sea, and fearing the premature darkness which might put a stop to the pursuit, Joshua prayed that the daylight would last till the destruction of the enemy was complete. The prayer may have been answered in some natural way, by the dispersion of the storm, and the continuation of the light, and the pursuit thus not

^x "Records of the Past," ix. 50.

checked till the slaughter was effected. Commentators have gathered parallel utterances from classical writings, which show that the idea was a not uncommon one. Thus Homer makes Athena keep the night tarrying at its western limit, and hold back the golden-throned dawn at the eastern edge of ocean, lest morning should find Odysseus and Penelope weeping still. So Agamemnon prays that the day will last till he has overthrown the house of Priam.¹ We may add another solution of the command which has been proposed. It has been thought that Joshua prayed for a prolongation not of the light, but of the darkness. The Amorites, already disheartened by the storm and the obscuration of the sun, whom they worshipped as a god, would be still further dismayed by the continuation of the darkness, which even the moon was not to illumine. Against this view, which perhaps the language may be considered to support, there is the objection that the tempest would have interfered with the pursuit; and we are nowhere led to suppose that the Israelites stood still while the hailstones did their work for them. Divine aid waits upon human exertion, but does not relieve from the necessity thereof.

To return from this digression, which was rendered necessary by the controversies which have arisen respecting the miracle. Profiting by the daylight as the tempest cleared away, Joshua followed the flying Amorites down the pass to Lower Beth-horon. Arms and accoutrements and apparel strewed the way, while numerous corpses, battered and bruised, attested the irresistible power of the hailstorm which had fallen on the fugitives. At the lower end of the defile, where it opened on the plain country, lay the two towns Azekah and Makkedah. To these, as places of refuge, the defeated Amorites hurried in headlong confusion. The former is known better by name than by position. We hear of it in connection with the episode of David and Goliath, when the Philistines encamped between it and Shochoh, which is the modern Shuweikeh, situated on the south slopes of the Wady es Sunt (the "Valley of Acacias"), at its eastern end. It is mentioned again as fortified by Rehoboam, and of sufficient importance to be besieged by Nebuchadnezzar. After the captivity it was restored and occupied; but up to the present time its site has not been identified. Makkedah has been fixed by the Palestine sur-

¹ Hom. "Od." xxiii. 241 ff.; "Il." ii. 412 ff.; xviii. 239 f.

veyors at El Mughar, some ruins on the north side of the great Wady Surar, which runs from the hill country of Judaea to the sea-coast a few miles below Ekron. The ground for this identification consists in the opinion that here alone in the Philistine plain are any caves found. But a limestone country is always full of caves, and it is evident that the explorers cannot know for certain that none exist in places not visited by them. The place is at least twenty-five miles from Gibeon. Porter, with greater probability, identifies it with a ruined village now called El Klediah, situated on the northern slope of the Wady es Sunt, eight miles north-east of Eleutheropolis, and quite twenty from Beth-horon. In either case it must indeed have been a wonderful day's work to follow the fugitive host to its refuge, and there to complete its destruction. The five kings kept together in this disastrous rout, and, thoroughly dispirited and spent with fatigue, on arriving in the neighbourhood of Makkedah, they turned aside and concealed themselves in the well-known cave, amid a grove of trees, near the town. Informed of this, Joshua wasted no time upon them, but posted a body of men to turn their asylum into a prison by rolling great stones to its entrance and guarding the place. Here he himself remained and pitched his camp, but ordered the picked troops to continue the pursuit, that he might cut off the stragglers before they made good their escape to the fortified cities of their friends. This in a great measure he succeeded in doing. Few of that confederate host found the safety which they sought. The Lord had delivered them into the Israelites' hands, and they were slain with a very great slaughter. Returning at length, after a day or two, from the pursuit to Makkedah, the wearied army found the conqueror encamped in the vicinity of the cave where the kings had concealed themselves. The victory had cost the Israelites but few lives ; safe and sound they reached their new quarters ; a great awe had fallen upon the heathen ; no one offered to attack them ; in the proverbial language of the time it is said, "None moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel." An act of justice remained to be done, and it was executed with much solemnity. The army was gathered round the mouth of the cave in a huge circle ; the stones were rolled away, and the five kings, travel-

¹ Josh. x. 21 : "Reversus est omnis exercitus ad Josue in Macea, ubi tunc erant castra, sani et integro numero." Vulg.

stained, downcast, stripped of their royal trappings, were brought forth from their hiding-place. They prostrated themselves, or were forced to the earth, before the conqueror ; then Joshua called on the brave officers who had been engaged in the battle to come near and place their feet on the necks of the grovelling kings. This emblematic action was designed not merely for the humiliation of the defeated enemy, and for an exhibition of their complete subjection to the victors ; it was no arrogant triumph on Joshua's part, such as we see depicted on Assyrian and Egyptian monuments, or such as was practised by Byzantine emperors even in late Christian times. He was not, in the Psalmist's language, making his enemies his foot-stool. He assumes no personal superiority, but directs his officers to employ the symbolical act in order to encourage them in the contest in which they were engaged, and to inspirit the people generally to believe in the goodness of their cause and its certain success. He addresses them in words which, as applied to himself, had sunk into his own heart : " Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage ; for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight." Repugnant as it would be to our views and habits thus to exult over a fallen foe, we must not disregard the motives of Joshua in this public humiliation, or make more of it than it deserves. Gentleness and consideration in the treatment of enemies were unknown and never expected ; if humanity was shown, it was an instance of graciousness far in advance of the age, and was abnormal both in its cause and operation. In the present case there was no studied cruelty in the exhibition. The usual mark of subjection was enforced in such a mode as to give to it a new and significant meaning, and impress a necessary lesson on the army and the people. After this symbolical ceremony had been witnessed by the assembled congregation, Joshua with his own hands put the five kings to death, and then had their dead bodies hung on trees or crosses as an aggravation of their punishment, for one thus suspended was considered accursed. Thus he had treated the king of Ai. The corpses hung all that day in the sight of Israel, reminding them of the great victory lately won, and inspiring them with confidence in the future ; and at eventide, as the law in Deuteronomy¹ enjoined, in order

¹ Deut. xxi. 23. The special command occurs nowhere else in the Pentateuch— hence a presumption that Deuteronomy was well known to Joshua.

that the land should not be defiled by the longer presence of that which was accursed, they were taken down and flung into the cave which had been their refuge and now became their sepulchre. At its mouth the stones which had imprisoned them while alive were again heaped up, and served for many a long day as a memorial of the memorable battle of Beth-horon.

A long and vigorous campaign ensued, which resulted in the conquest of the whole of Southern Palestine. As was natural, the first place which felt the Israelites' power was the one nearest to their present encampment, the town of Makkedah, which had sided with the Amorites. This offered little resistance ; it was soon captured, and with its king and people suffered the fate of Jericho, of all the human beings within its walls not one being left alive. Sternly and uncompromisingly Joshua executed the charge committed to him ; as the instrument of Divine vengeance he had but to do his duty, and neither the custom of the time nor his own private feeling encouraged repugnance to what might abstractedly be deemed a most odious and demoralizing business. The Palestinians themselves expected no gentler treatment. They would have dealt the same measure to the Hebrews, had they won the opportunity. The Israelites were imbued with the sentiments and views of their age and position ; and their conscience was not revolted by actions which a purer code would have repudiated. Thus throughout the sanguinary campaign they regarded themselves as executing righteous judgment under competent command, and were not made barbarous and cruel by this obedience to a superior will. City after city fell into their hands. The details of the assault in each case are not recorded, nor is the capture of all the towns mentioned. Certain instances are given, and we are left to infer from future circumstances the extent of the present operations.

From Makkedah the invaders turned westward to the Shephe-lah, and invested the city of Libnah. The name of this city means "whiteness," and suggests some natural feature which made it conspicuous. Hence Stanley¹ has identified it with the white-faced hill opposite to Ascalon, on the plain of Philistia, to which the Crusaders gave the name of *Blanche-Garde*, and which is now called Tell es-Safieh. But this is probably a

¹ "Sinai and Palestine," pp. 207, 257.

mistake, as the hill in question is with much certainty now considered to be the site of the ancient Philistine city of Gath. Libnah is with greater likelihood thought to have stood on the remarkable isolated hill covered to this day with ruins, called Arak el-Menshiyeh, about five miles west of Eleutheropolis ; while Conder deems it to be Eleutheropolis (Beit Jibrin) itself. In a limestone district the appellation would be appropriate to many a place ; hence arises the difficulty in the identification. In the later history of Israel Libnah occurs more than once. It was one of the Levitical cities, and from some unexplained reason revolted from Judah in the days of Jehoram, but returned to its allegiance, or was re-conquered shortly afterwards, and suffered a siege at the hands of the Assyrians. This city Joshua took, and with its king and population utterly destroyed. The next town captured is one also celebrated in connection with Assyrian invasion. This was Lachish. One of the most interesting of the Assyrian sculptures brought to light by modern researches, and now in the British Museum, is one representing the capture of this city by Sennacherib. Here may be seen the great king seated on his throne in front of the town, while citizens and captives prostrate themselves at his feet, and offer to him precious things. The inscription in the bas-relief reads thus : " Sennacherib, the king of multitudes, the king of Assyria, sat on an upright throne, and the spoil of the city of Lachish passed before him."¹ It has been identified by many high authorities with Um Lakis, a low round hill, covered now with heaps of stones and rubbish, on the road to Gaza, about eleven miles west from Eleutheropolis. But as Lachish was a place of great strength, and more than once baffled the attacks of the Eastern monarchs, Um Lakis, though its geographical situation answers historical requirements, seems scarcely to offer the strategical position which is demanded. Hence Conder suggests another great mound in the same direction, Tell el Hesy, which Robinson describes as " a truncated cone, rising some two hundred feet, with a fine plain on the top, somewhat resembling the Frank mountain, though by no means so high. . . . A finer position for a fortress or a fortified city could hardly be imagined." And although no remains of walls or buildings now remain, travellers, who visited the place four hundred years before Robinson, found there many ancient ruins ;

¹ Sayce, " Fresh Light from the Monuments," pp. 123, 124.

and the well-known propensities of the Arabs for using the old materials to repair their own houses would account for the disappearance of the antique stones which marked the site of Lachish.¹ A third site has also been proposed, Zukkarijeh, a height on the same road, a little nearer to Eleutheropolis. The town made a stubborn defence against Joshua's attack, and was not taken till the second day of the siege, while all the other places seem to have succumbed at once on the appearance of the invaders. It has been well noted as one of the undesigned coincidences in the Bible, that of all the cities captured at this time, Lachish alone is said to have withstood the invaders for two days, which is to be accounted for by its abnormally strong position, and is in full agreement with what we read of its history in succeeding times.²

In its resistance of the Israelites Lachish was aided by the forces of Horam, king of Gezer. This town, which later was called Gazara, and by Josephus Gadara,³ has been most successfully identified with Tell el Jezer, where a bilingual inscription on a rock, apparently of Maccabean date, but recording a more ancient Levitical measurement, marks the "limit of Gezer." The place is about six miles east of Ekron, lying between the valley of Ajalon and the sea, from which it is fourteen miles distant. The Tell itself, which rises in prominent isolation about 750 feet above sea level, "is long and irregular in shape, with terraces at its sides, supported by a great wall of large unhewn blocks of stone. Near the eastern end is a raised square platform of earth, about 200 feet each way, containing similar blocks. This is all that is now left of the once populous city. A fine spring on the east must have supplied it abundantly with water, while the plain below stretches out in rich corn-fields to the sand-hills near the sea. If it was hard for the citizens to climb to their lofty home, the view from it well repaid them when it was reached, for the plain of Sharon to the north, with Lydda, and doubtless in those days many other towns or villages, and the great Philistine plain to the south, with its varying surface and its busy life, lay at their feet; the purple mountains of Judæa rising

¹ Conder, "Quarterly Paper," Jan., 1878; Robinson, ii. 390.

² Blunt, "Undesigned Coincidences," pp. 107 f. See 2 Kings xiv. 19; xix. 8; 2 Chron. xi. 9.

³ 2 Macc. x. 32; Josephus, "Ant." v. 1. 22.

behind them to the east, while the view to the west was only closed by the blue horizon of the great sea."¹ Lying far northward of his present operations, Joshua did not think fit to invest it at this time, but contented himself with inflicting a severe defeat on Horam, who perished with his army under the walls of Lachish. Gezer became a Levitical city, but the Canaanite inhabitants were not exterminated, and it seems to have fallen under the power of the Egyptians in after time, as Pharaoh gave it as a dower to his daughter when she espoused Solomon.²

It was a short march from Lachish to Eglon (about three miles distant), which was the next place that felt the irresistible might of Israel. There is happily no difficulty about the identification of this town. It is the modern Ajlan, which is described as a low round white hillock, covered with scattered heaps of unhewn stones, on the direct road from Jerusalem to Gaza, nine miles from Eleutheropolis, and twelve or more from Gaza. The absence of more regularly defined ruins in this and many other cases is accounted for by the fact noted by travellers in the East, that the houses were usually built of sun-dried bricks, and walls and fortifications of a soft calcareous stone, which under climatic variations is wont to crumble away and leave little trace behind.³ The town was allotted to Judah when the tribes were settled, but it is not mentioned again in Scripture.

Leaving the plain and marching eastward, Joshua "went up" to the hill country, and attacked the ancient city of Hebron,⁴ which lay some twenty-five miles distant. Unlike most of the Palestinian towns Hebron is placed in a hollow with hills on all sides, and its capture was a task of little difficulty. The inhabitants had chosen another king to fill the place of the one who had perished at Makkedah, and with the aid of the sons of Anak, a distinguished clan of the Amorites, who dwelt there, might have thought of offering efficient resistance; but the new monarch could save neither himself nor his people from destruction. He and his subjects, and the villages

¹ Geikie, i. 96 ff.

² 1 Kings ix. 16.

³ Robinson, § xi. vol. ii. 392; Porter, *ap.* "Kitto's Cyclop."

⁴ Not to repeat what has been said in another place, I may be allowed to refer, for a description of Hebron, to "David: His Life and Times," pp. 81, 82.

which were dependent upon this mother-city, suffered the usual fate. The interest attaching to this place must have been intense to the minds of Joshua and his pious followers. With what a flood of memories must they have been overwhelmed as they beheld with their eyes the spot of which they had heard so much, with which from their ancestors' stories they were already familiar ! Here five hundred years ago the great Abraham had pitched his tent ; if the famous terebinth tree which had sheltered him was not living, the spot where it stood could be easily identified. The whole locality was rife with memorials of the patriarch ; here his wife Sarah had died, and was buried in Machpelah, the double cave, which he bought for a family sepulchre of Ephron the Hittite. Here he himself and Isaac and Jacob lay entombed. With what veneration must Joshua have regarded the twin vault with its low-browed entrance, not as now blocked with massive masonry, but allowing ingress to the reverent pilgrim ! How vividly must he have realized the vitality and continuity of God's promises, which were even now working out their accomplishment, the truth of which was confirmed by the presence of the Israelites at their forefathers' grave !

Hebron and its subject towns subdued, the Israelites turned to the south-west, and passing through the Wady el-Dilbeh, with its beautiful springs, an unusual and welcome sight in that arid region, and mounting a steep track girded with dwarf-oaks, arbutus, and other scrub, they arrived in view of Debir, which is identified with the modern village of Dbaheriyyeh, situated at a distance of twelve miles from Hebron. Debir, from the names which it has borne at various epochs, must have had a curious and eventful history. At one time it was known as Kirjath-sanna, which is explained as "city of law" ; at another time it was called Kirjath-sepher, "city of books" ; both names implying that it was a seat of learning, a home of Canaanite culture, and perhaps an ancient oracle. The name Debir is interpreted by Jerome as " Oracle," and it is the term applied to the sanctuary in Solomon's temple. The geographical position of this place must have always given it importance. One of the south frontier strongholds, it commanded the roads from Egypt and the desert, from Gaza and Beersheba, and had certain towns dependent upon it, which made it a centre of vast consequence in the defence of the country.

The excavations which have been effected on the spot in later years have shown that the town was populous and strongly fortified ; but it offered no successful resistance to the attack of the Israelites flushed with preceding victories, and confident in the special support of Jehovah ; itself and its daughter cities were utterly destroyed.¹

With the mention of the conquest of Debir the details of the operations in the south are brought to a close, and we are told generally that Joshua smote all the land, the hills, the Negeb, the lowland, and the slopes—a comprehensive description which summarizes the results of the campaign, and implies that the whole district from the centre to the desert frontier in the extreme south was subdued. “The hills” denote the mountainous region extending southwards from Jerusalem. It consists of calcareous rock, and forms the watershed between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea. Rocky and rugged as it is, it offers many spots of great fertility in the valleys, and afforded good pasturage to the flocks of its numerous inhabitants. The “Negeb,” or south, is an arid district of limestone, with but few perennial springs, and therefore bereft of trees, and green only in the rainy season. At that time the ground is decked with flowers—the daisy, the red anemone, the yellow tulip, and crops of corn are grown in every available spot. It is by no means a desolate wilderness, and though tame and uninteresting to the eye of the seeker after the picturesque and the beautiful in nature, it offered facilities for cultivation to the diligent husbandman who not only ploughed up every level spot, but by a system of terraces utilized the very rocks and made them support his crops and vines. The lowland, or Shephelah, was the strip of plain along the sea-coast, extending from Carmel to Gaza. It was sandy, but productive and populous, and contained many places of importance. The term translated “the springs” in the Authorized Version, and “the slopes” in the Revised, denotes the undulating land at the foot of the Judaean hills, between them and the Shephelah, a region intersected by brooks and ravines, and consequently fertile and prosperous. The narrator concludes his summary with the words : “Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon.” The limits of the con-

¹ Geikie, i. 360 ff. ; “Quarterly Paper,” Jan., 1875 ; “Pulpit Commentary” on Josh. x. 38.

quest are not difficult to define. Kadesh-barnea lies far south on the very edge of the great desert ; it had sad memories for Joshua as the place whence he had gone as one of the twelve spies, and which had witnessed the murmuring of the people and the sentence passed upon them. Being the chief or only city in that quarter, it is probably introduced here to denote the most easterly direction of the conquest, while Gaza, which lay within a mile of the sea, indicates its extreme westerly extent. The limit to the north at this time is marked by Gibeon, the submission of which formed the prelude to this triumphant campaign. What is meant by the country of Goshen is not exactly known, but it lay on the south-east of Judæa, and may have been so named by the Israelites in memory of their sojourn in the frontier land of Egypt, whence also the city so called (chap. xi. 16 ; xv. 51) may have derived its appellation.

Having accomplished in the course of some weeks thus much of his mighty enterprise, Joshua led his army back to the camp at Gilgal, there to recruit themselves after their labours and to prepare for fresh exploits. The campaign had been most rapid and successful, "because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel ;" but it was scarcely as complete as at first sight it appears to be. Later events prove that, although the places actually captured were then destroyed with their inhabitants, a large portion of the population escaped the general slaughter, and having withdrawn in safety for a time, on the removal of the attacking force they returned and occupied their old quarters in the vicinity. It must needs have been so. The Israelites were not directed to exterminate the Canaanites at once ; such an undertaking was physically impossible under the circumstances, and would have been inexpedient if feasible. The displacement was to be gradual. The invaders were not prepared to colonize every district which they seized ; and to massacre all the human beings, leaving the land untenanted by man, was to consign it to deterioration and desolation. No country was more dependent upon manual labour for its well-being. The destruction of wild beasts alone needed constant vigilance and courage. Besides this, where water was but scantily supplied by natural resources, the skill of man was imperatively needed for its storage and distribution, and any failure in these respects involved dearth and famine. What

neglect produces in once fertile districts may be seen any day in Palestine, where ruined watercourses, dilapidated terraces, broken inclosures, attest the prevalence of a cultivation which has vanished long ago. Either from inability or from policy a large number of places, as we shall see, was left unconquered. Gaza itself, a very important Philistine town in a commanding situation, was not acquired. Indeed, the Philistines seem to have been not disturbed in their possessions by Joshua, who never took, for instance, Gath or Ashdod, Ekron or Ashkelon, though most of them are mentioned in the distribution as falling to the lot of Judah. If any of these cities were captured by the Hebrews, they were not retained, and were speedily re-occupied by the native inhabitants.* Certainly in the times immediately succeeding those of which we treat, the five Philistine cities were in the possession of the original owners and actively hostile to Israel. In fact the chosen people never did carry out the programme specified. As in all human undertakings, imperfection intervened, and in part frustrated and delayed the designs of Providence.

* Comp. *Judg.* i. 18; iii. 3.

CHAPTER VII.

CONQUEST OF THE NORTH.

Confederacy formed in the north—Jabin—Waters of Merom—Hazor—The confederate cities and tribes; Madon; Shimron; Achshaph; Dor—Canaanite cavalry and chariots—Kadesh—Joshua makes a forced march; defeats the Canaanites at Merom—Sidon—Misrephoth-Maim—Treatment of horses—Hazor destroyed—Conquest gradually completed—Anakim—Hardening of the heart—General survey of the conquest—Eastern Palestine—Extent of West territory—Baal-Gad—Mount Halak—List of conquered kings—Geder; Hormah; Arad; Adullam; Taanach; Megiddo; Jokneam; Carmel; Gilgal; Tirzah—Unconquered territory—The Philistines; Geshurites; River of Egypt; Phoenicia; Mearah; Aphek; Hamath.

NOT long had Joshua rested in the camp at Gilgal when he heard that a formidable confederacy had been formed in the north in order to resist his further progress, if not to deprive him of the fruit of previous conquests. At the head of this league stood Jabin, king of Hazor. The name Jabin is interpreted “he understands,” and seems to have been the hereditary and official title of the monarchs of that city, as Pharaoh in Egypt, Abimelech among the Philistines, Cæsar and Augustus at Rome. Hazor, which signifies “a fort” or “inclosure,” is naturally a name which appears in many localities, “as *fort* in French and German, *caer* in Welsh, and the termination *cester* in English.”¹ The city over which Jabin reigned was situated, according to Josephus,² above the Lake Semechonitis, which is known as the Waters of Merom, and now as El Huleh. This lake, which is about twelve miles north of Gennesaret, is one of the most beautiful spots in Palestine. “The rich plains,”

¹ “Pulp. Comm.” on Josh. xi. 1.

² “Ant.” v. 5. 1.

says Dr. Geikie,¹ "here brown with tilth, there bright with crops, yonder stretching out in succulent pastures dotted with flocks ; the blue lake sleeping beneath the hills, long reed-beds bending their feathery tops in the soft air, silver streams netting the landscape ; the waters full of water-fowl, the trees vocal with birds, the flowers humming with bees ; the native hamlet, the Arab camp, the herdsman afield, the ploughs drawn by ox, or ass, or camel, slowly moving over the lea ; the flat-headed black buffalo delighting himself in the pools and the soft marshy coolness ; the whole canopied by a sky of crystal clearness and infinite height—make up a landscape of exceeding beauty." "From Safed," a town between the Sea of Galilee and Merom, somewhat to the west, "to Lake Huleh is a gradual descent of nearly 3,000 feet, over hill and dale, the valleys running mainly east and west. Some time before reaching the lake the country opens, and the lake itself lies in one of the pleasantest valleys of Palestine. The sheet of water is about two miles broad at its widest part, and four miles long ; but a great marsh of papyrus reed stretches for nearly six miles north of the clear surface, covering from one to three miles in breadth. Through this flows the Jordan, as yet only a small stream, several tributaries joining it from different wadies on its course, which, as it passes through the miniature forest, widens into small lakes, the haunt of innumerable water-fowl, as the outer beds of reeds are the lairs of swine and of other wild beasts. . . . On the west, the Safed hills open out into long sweeping plains and valleys of pleasant green ; but on the eastern side there is no such broad border of open land, the hills rising close to the pear-shaped basin of the lake. The water is from twenty to thirty feet deep, its surface lying almost exactly on the same level as the sea, but nearly 900 feet above the Lake of Galilee."

Though the possible site of Hazor is confined within narrow limits, it has not been identified with absolute certainty, more than one locality exhibiting the features which are required. Sir Charles Wilson finds the ancient city in the ruins of Harrah, consisting of huge blocks of stone, rudely hewn, and put together without cement, which crown a hill about a mile west of the lake. Robinson fixes on Tel Khuraibeh, a hill occupied by ancient remains, nearly opposite the northern extremity of the

¹ "The Holy Land and the Bible," ii. 380, 370.

lake at about three miles to the west, and evidently once a place of importance and of great strategical strength. Here the modern name does not recall the ancient. But Conder sees the Arabic equivalent in Hadireh, a locality about one and a half miles from Robinson's site, and four south of Kadesh, where Jebel Hadireh and Merj Hadireh, the mountain and meadow of Hadireh, may well be regarded as representing the "inclosure" of Hazor. On the plains below this fortress where the chariots, here first mentioned in warfare, could be successfully used, Jabin was gathering a numerous host. The Canaanites had missed the most favourable opportunity for attacking the invaders. Split up into a number of petty states, divided by the rivalries incidental to such a condition, with no central authority to inaugurate a combined movement, the northerners had not joined the confederacy of which nominally Adonizedek was the head, when their active operations might have put Joshua between two enemies and crushed him at a blow. Too late, when the southern district had fallen a prey to the strangers, they discovered their mistake, and by a concerted effort endeavoured to repair the error. Involuntarily they played into Joshua's hands, enabling him to deal in detail with enemies whom he could not have confronted in their full strength. What was the position of Jabin at this crisis is not accurately determined. He seems to have been the head of the movement, being perhaps the representative of the Hittite authority at Carchemish. He it was who, feeling the importance of the conjuncture and the necessity of immediate and combined action, summoned his fellow-countrymen to meet on the shores of Merom, and there to make a strenuous effort to repel the audacious invaders. The summons to join the confederacy was not confined to the tribes in this district alone; while they were naturally the first to be invited, others far remote received the same call. The narrator is careful to specify all, that the power of God might be better acknowledged, when He gave victory to Israel against such overwhelming odds. It was a supreme effort, an imperative mandate, like that of the fiery cross or the oriflamme in mediæval times. First in the catalogue of allies comes Jobab, king of Madon, a town (now Madin) situated some twenty miles south, near the so-called Horns of Hattin, two grassy knolls on the west of Gennesareth, where tradition says our Lord preached His Sermon on the

Mount, and where, in 1187, after a hotly contested battle of two days' duration, Saladin utterly defeated the Christians and secured the kingdom of Jerusalem for the Mohammedan power. From Madon the message sped to Shimron, which, under its Talmudic name Simunieh, is found on a hill on the northern edge of the plain of Esraelon, five miles due west of Nazareth ; thence it was forwarded to Achshaph, the modern Kefr Yasif, twenty miles north-west of Shimron and six north-east of Acco (Acre).¹ Thus the chiefs of the Province of Galilee, as we know it, were foremost in joining the confederacy. But this limited circle by no means met the views of Jabin ; he desired to engage in the enterprise representatives of all the tribes of Canaan. Northwards to the kings of the mountains under Lebanon, southward to those that dwelt in the plains below Gennesareth and in the fair valley of Esraelon, the summons came. The Arabah, the Jordan valley on the east, the Shepelah, the lowland district on the west, sent forth their warriors. The ancient city Dor, celebrated alike for its harbour and the mussel which furnished the far-famed Tyrian dye, responded to the call. Situated on a rugged promontory twelve miles south of Carmel, and nine north of Cæsarea, the modern village of Tanturah represents this Canaanite town ; but the chief remains are of Roman date, slabs of marble, sculptured capitals and hewn stones strewing the shore, and attesting former opulence and prosperity.² From the sea-coast still farther south, from tribes as yet unsubdued, from the remnants of the southern confederacy, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, from the land of Mizpah under Hermon, and where Cœle-Syria extends its vast plains, contingents assembled in large numbers. Well armed, animated by a fierce patriotism, and containing in their ranks many hardy mountaineers, skilled in the use of weapons and practised in war, the Canaanite host was formidable in appearance and, as it seemed, invincible in power. They could boast of superiority in arms and in military training, they could point with confidence to their strong fortifications, they could vaunt their high civilization so far above the capacities of the nomadic horde which had presumed to invade the land. One element in this army inspired the utmost

¹ These identifications are not certain. I have adopted them from Captain Cnder and Mr. Archibald Henderson's Handbook, "Palestine," as they give definiteness to our picture.

² Geikie, i. 70.

terror, and this was the cavalry and the chariots. The Israelites were foot soldiers ; they had never employed horses in their wars, and were indeed utterly unused to the sight of them. The enemies whom hitherto they had met, like themselves fought on foot ; they were highlanders and used highland modes of warfare. But these northern plains offered facilities for the operations of cavalry, and the iron chariots were one of the most effective and formidable parts of the Canaanite army. The term "iron" applied to these vehicles refers only to the material of which the tires of the wheels were made, in contradistinction to the rude wooden discs of the agricultural carts. The chariots were not armed with the scythe as those used by Britons and Gauls in primitive days ; they were simply carriages on two low wheels, closed in front and entered from behind, drawn by two horses, and occupied usually by two persons, of whom one managed the steeds and the other plied his weapons, arrows, javelins, and spear. It was the appearance and rush of these vehicles drawn by strange animals that made them so much dreaded ; the lances of infantry resolutely opposed to them, never failed to stop the most vehement onslaught, but it required unusual nerve to face this attack unmoved, and it needed experience in the safety secured by steadiness and obedience to enable raw troops to stand the charge. The Israelites, who were forbidden to multiply horses, lest they should wish to return to Egypt or enter on foreign wars, or learn luxurious habits, viewed these chariots with the same dismay with which the Romans beheld elephants for the first time in an enemy's lines, and a word of Divine encouragement alone gave them spirit to contend with a foe possessed of this unfamiliar arm. On the wide plain below the Lake Huleh the vast host of the Canaanites assembled. That it was of formidable numbers is evident from the hyperbolical description of the narrator : "They went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many." Josephus,¹ gathering his facts we know not whence, reckons their forces at three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and twenty thousand chariots—an amount that seems incredible ; he also makes them encamp "near the city Berotha in Upper Galilee, not far from Kedesa." The city Beroth is unknown, but Kadesh is celebrated as the birthplace

¹ "Ant." v. 1. 18.

of Barak, the intrepid vanquisher of Sisera, the commander under another (if he was another) Jabin.* The ruins of the latter place are found four miles north-west of Lake Merom, situated on the spur of a hill overlooking a rich plain. It is one of the towns mentioned in the Karnak inscription as taken by Thotmes III. in his expedition into Palestine.

News of this great gathering at the waters of Merom soon reached Joshua at Gilgal. Whether the Canaanites intended to assume the offensive and march to attack the Hebrews, is not ascertained, though as their force consisted so largely of chariots and horses it is unlikely that they would attempt to move from the plains where alone this arm could be of service. Most likely they expected to attack the Israelites on their appearance from the south ; but they were by no means prepared for Joshua's tactics. That skilful commander determined to take the enemy by surprise as he had done at Gibeon. The distance from Gilgal to Merom is about seventy miles. Josephus says that the march took five days, which may well have been consumed in moving a large body of men through that difficult country. When within a few miles of Gennesareth, Joshua learned from his spies the numbers and equipment of the enemy. Then, lest the vastness of the host and the unusual spectacle of chariots and horses should dismay the Israelites, the word of the Lord came to him, saying: "Be not afraid because of them ; for to-morrow at this time will I [emphatic] deliver them up all slain before Israel ; thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire." After such an assurance there could be no doubt or fear ; the result was certain ; however great the odds and unusual the danger, victory should be with God's people. Suddenly, while the Canaanites deemed him far away, Joshua from one of the mountain passes swooped down upon the enemy, fell upon them like a thunderbolt, as the original has it. Before they realized the attack he was among them. Thrown into confusion, with no time to rally, unable to use the chariots on which they so greatly relied, their very numbers only impeding their movements, the Canaanites were put to the sword. Then ensued a panic and a headlong flight.

* The episode of Deborah and Barak is thought by some critics to belong to the time of Joshua, as they consider it unlikely that Hazor could have recovered from its utter overthrow during the time of the Judges ; but the allusions in Deborah's song hardly apply to the days of Joshua.

Some fled to the north-west, some to the south and south-west others to the east. The former body of fugitives made for the friendly city of Sidon ("great Zidon," as the historian calls it, as being the metropolis of Phoenicia), which was some forty miles distant. They would reach that place by taking to the northern mountains, crossing the Leontes, and passing along the plain to the sea-coast ; and this stronghold, famed in Homeric song,^{*} rising majestically on its rocky site, girt on three sides by the sea, and on its land side defended by a high wall with flanking towers, offered a secure refuge which the Israelites were powerless to capture. Another band of fugitives made for Misrephoth-Maim, "burnings of waters," a peculiar appellation which is supposed to refer either to hot springs, or salt pits, or, with little probability, to glass houses for which in later time the locality was famous. The situation is undetermined, but as it was without question in the neighbourhood of Sidon, and there is a certain affinity in the names, it has been identified with Zarephath or Sarepta (*hod. Surafend*) on the coast some six miles south of Sidon. The place has always retained its fame from its connection with the great prophet Elijah, and to this day the remains of a church are exhibited which are said to mark the site of the widow's house. Yet another party of the defeated Canaanites retreated to the valley of Mizpeh, under the snow-capped Hermon, whence in all the pride of power and military arrogance they had lately set forth. Of the fugitives, those that were overtaken were slain without mercy, their chariots were burned, and the horses were houghed or hamstrung so as to be rendered useless. This was done in obedience to the command of the Lord, Joshua in this, as in all other respects, giving an example of complete obedience. Thus the Israelites were taught not to put their trust in chariots and horses, but in the Lord alone ; the Canaanites learned the futility of their best efforts and most formidable appliances when employed against the chosen people. Besides this, there was sound policy in the measure. Horses to the Hebrews who were entirely unpractised in their use, would have been a burden as well as a snare. They would have had to maintain them, and take them with them in their campaigns, lest the enemy should gain possession of them and use them to their hurt. To render them of no avail for military purposes was like the practice in modern warfare of

* Hom. "Il." vi. 289 ff. ; xxiii. 741 ff. ; "Od." xv. 425.

spiking an enemy's guns which cannot be carried off. Mountaineers like the Israelites had no more use for horses than the Highlanders in Scotland or the hardy Swiss; and as these animals were not employed in agricultural operations, the maiming of them was simply depriving an opponent of an effective arm. So a general has sometimes to destroy ammunition and provisions which he cannot secure for his own purposes.

Having pursued the defeated Canaanites till they were dispersed or had taken refuge in inaccessible positions, Joshua returned towards the scene of the late battle, and invested Hazor. It is not unlikely that on their utter defeat Jabin and his allies submitted to certain terms, and agreed to become vassals of their conquerors, but that while Joshua was pursuing his victories in distant quarters, they had revolted and resumed their independence, trusting to the strength of Hazor as the centre of the insurrection. Such proceedings must be checked by prompt and severe measures, and Hazor must be made an example of the fate that awaited rebellion. This place accordingly, as the metropolis of these northern tribes, and a stronghold of vast importance, he took and burned to the ground, putting to the sword the king and all the inhabitants, with the design of preventing any future occupation while his attention was occupied in other quarters. In much the same manner he treated the cities which had actually taken part in the war, and had sent their contingents to the gathering at Merom; their kings and their people he utterly destroyed, as Moses had commanded, only taking the spoil and the cattle for a prey, the places not being devoted, like Jericho, though the human beings were. None of these towns, however, he thought it necessary to consume with fire; he left them each standing on its own hill,¹ contenting himself with depriving them of their populace, and seizing their property. Thus in his entire conscientiousness did Joshua execute the orders of his great predecessor, his one aim being to do his duty and to obey.

Of the desultory wars that followed the great battle of Merom we have no detailed account, nor do we know exactly how long they lasted. It is certain, however, that the conquest of the

¹ The Authorized Version has, "cities that stood still in their strength," but the Hebrew is literally, "that stood on their mound," and this means merely, each on its hill, such being the usual position of cities in Canaan.

land took from five to seven years, and the grand results which are enumerated in chapter xii. were effected after long-continued efforts, comprising expeditions, battles, and sieges, of which no record is preserved. In many cases territory once conquered was re-occupied by the original inhabitants on the withdrawal of the victorious Israélites, and had to be recovered by further contests. This was the case with Hebron and the towns in its vicinity, with Debir and Anab. This latter city, the name of which still survives, lay amid the Judæan hills, some ten miles south of Hebron, and one mile from Debir. These places had been seized by the Anakims, who had to be dispossessed before the families to whom they were allotted could colonize them. We shall hear of these proceedings in another chapter. The Anakims were a race of huge stature, either aborigines or very early immigrants from the region of Babylon, who had settled at first on the eastern side of Jordan, in the territories afterwards known as Edom and Moab, and subsequently had occupied the hill country of Judæa, and taken refuge in the cities of the Philistines. It was the sight of these giants which had so alarmed the spies when they penetrated to the vale of Hebron on their visit of reconnaissance, and led them basely to shrink from an enterprise which involved a contest with such terrible foes. The greater portion of these people was exterminated at this time, but a minority was amalgamated with the Philistines of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, and a family of them existed in Saul's time, when the shepherd lad with his sling and stone overcame the blustering champion Goliath, and even later, when David's chosen warriors encountered and slew the giant's brethren. Deteriorating in size and strength as they changed their free mountain air and habits for the atmosphere and enervating life of lowland cities, they gradually died out, and are never mentioned in subsequent histories.

We may now take a general survey of the extent to which these conquests extended. Not that the subjugation of all the districts named was complete at this time, or that the former inhabitants were annihilated. Such a result was not intended, and, as we have already seen, would have been highly inexpedient, throwing much land out of cultivation, and introducing all the evils of depopulation. But for the moment all opposition was overcome; armed resistance was at an end; there

was no longer any confederacy to be dreaded ; the possession of the land was a gradual process indeed, but one that might now advance unchecked and with certainty. After the terrible examples which they had witnessed, the Canaanites were content to live at peace in such places as were left to them, and acquiesced in sullen submission while the invaders portioned out the land. None of them, indeed, made overtures to the conquerors save the wily Gibeonites, for, as the historian notes, with respect to the rest, "it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that he might utterly destroy (devote) them, that they might have no favour ; but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses." This hardening of the heart is the effect of the operation of well-known laws. It was seen, though wrongly understood, by the heathen. We are all familiar with the proverb : " *Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*," implying the moral perverseness of those who, in spite of knowledge and warning, rush to perdition. The phrase is used frequently of Pharaoh ; it is used of the Egyptians when they recklessly pursued the Israelites to their own destruction. But we are not hence to infer that there was any interference with men's moral freedom in these cases. If they resist the intimations of God's will conveyed to them by the inward monitions of conscience, or by competent messengers, or by external circumstances, their moral sense is weakened, they are blinded even to prudential considerations ; and this is said to be God's doing because He foreknows the result ; it is in obedience to a universal law, and is often a punishment inflicted by God. The hardening does not precede, but follows on sin. Men first harden their own hearts before God hardens them. And when He does this He acts judicially, punishing sinners by their sin. The Canaanites who had persisted in their idolatry and degrading vice, and had not profited by the plain evidence of God's interposition in the case of the Israelites, were blinded to their own interests and recklessly hurried to destruction.

The country on the east of Jordan had been conquered towards the close of the life of Moses, the legislator being led to effect the seizure by the irresistible force of circumstances, rather than by any deliberate desire of colonizing this comparatively exposed and defenceless district. It was a large and fertile region, affording to the colonists much greater scope for expansion than fell to their brethren in the comparatively confined quarters

on the western side of Jordan. Its limits were the Arnon on the south, and Hermon or Antilibanus on the north. The Arnon loses itself in the Dead Sea about the middle of the eastern side, so that we may reckon the extent of this territory at about 120 miles long, with an average breadth of 50. The whole eastern edge of the Arabah from the upper lakes to the lower lay within its confines ; it comprised the rich pastures of the land of Gilead, the forests and corn lands of Bashan, as well as the stony tract of Argob with its multitude of strong cities and impregnable fortresses. There were, indeed, some portions which were left unsubdued. The Ammonites, in the centre of the country, with their formidable capital city, Rabbah, were not disturbed at this time ; nor were the Moabites, south of the Arnon and the Dead Sea, dispossessed ; and even some of the Midianite settlements were allowed to stand. But with all these exceptions the trans-Jordanic tribes were blessed with ample possessions and a soil of abundant fertility. Concerning the centre of this district, the country lying between the Lake of Tiberias and the Dead Sea, Mr. Selah Merrill ¹ writes as follows : "For the first four hours one could hardly see in any country a more delightful region in which to travel. It is utterly unlike, in every respect, the country which travellers usually see in Western Palestine. Here are old forests. The oaks are covered with moss, birds abound among the trees, the road is broad and free from stone. The views to the west of the Jordan valley and the mountains beyond, of Jebel esh Sheikh directly before us in the north, gleaming in the sun, and to the east of the ancient Bashan plain, are wide and magnificent, and the wheat-fields and other marks of fertility everywhere make me forget that I am in poverty-stricken Palestine. . . . This portion of the Gilead mountains is particularly diversified and beautiful. Uplands and gentle slopes, large forests with paths winding through them, green fields of grass and wheat, sheltered and sunny valleys, and still other romantic features exist here, which are not found in other portions of the country. . . . From certain summits the view towards the west is magnificent, commanding the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, the entire Jordan valley, and much of Western Palestine besides ; while from other points the sweep to the north, the south, and the east is almost unlimited. The eye runs from Damascus and its fertile

¹ 'East of the Jordan,' pp. 292, 356, 372 f.

plain far down into the remote regions of Moab, and although far to the east the Hauran mountains cut off the view in that direction, yet the prospect to the north-east and south-east is unobstructed. One sees all Bashan lying like a garden or a prairie at one's feet. The view embraces also a large part of Moab and Gilead. Trachonitis, Auranitis, Batanea, Gaulanitis, and Ituræa can from some points be brought under the eye at once. Bozrah is there, a city five miles in circumference, appearing like a small black spot on the plain. There is the battle-field where King Og was defeated. Yonder are his two capitals, Ashtaroth and Edrei. There are the sites of the sixty cities which had walls and brazen bars. Yonder is the route of the great army of the Israelites under Moses and Joshua."

"Another striking peculiarity of the land beyond Jordan is its fine water supply, as contrasted with Western Palestine, especially with the upper lands of Judæa. The rain, falling on the plateau and on the Syrian desert further east, sinks through the chalk to the impervious limestone beneath, and running westward along this bed, issues in fine springs about five hundred feet below the level of the plateau. From these springs considerable brooks run down each gorge, even in the dry autumn, and form affluents to the Jordan, or deliver their waters into the Dead Sea itself. Nothing was more remarkable in Moab when crossing from the Hebron mountains and the Mar Saba desert than thus to find ourselves suddenly entering a 'land of streams ;' but, as at Damascus, it is only the immediate course of the stream which remains green, with rushes, reeds, and brambles, while the mountains above are as bare and colourless as though there were no water in the land."

The extent of the conquered territory on the west of Jordan is stated with much precision as reaching "from Baal-Gad, in the valley of Lebanon, even unto the Mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir." The name of the northern limit is a reminder of the idolatry which was prevalent, and which the conquerors had to extirpate. It is the place of the "Lord of Fortune," a place where Baal was worshipped under the aspect of God of Luck. Standing on an isolated hill at the base of the snow-capped Hermon, the city has been easily identified under various names, and has had an interesting history. It is now called Banias ; in pre-Christian times it was known as Panium or Paneas, when

¹ Conder, "Heth and Moab," 123.

the worship of Pan superseded that of Baal, many memorials of both of these cults being still found in the neighbourhood. Coming into the possession of Philip, Tetrarch of Trachonitis, that prince added greatly to the town, and adorned it with splendid buildings, and, combining a memorial of his own name with a subtle flattery of the emperor, called it Cæsarea Philippi. Herod Agrippa II. re-named it Neronias. Its situation is one of quite remarkable beauty. It stands at the end of a gorge of the Hermon range, "with tall limestone cliffs to the north and east, a rugged torrent of basalt to the south, and a gentle wooded slope for its western front." Here are seen hills clothed with trees and verdant crops mingled with masses of naked rock, rich valleys, cascades, rivers, every variety of vegetation, Dean Stanley compares the Huleh plain that spreads in front of Banias to the Campagna, as seen from the mouth of the gorge at Tivoli. Behind the present village there is a great natural cavern in a cliff some hundred feet high, in front of which a stream of water bursts forth, which is one of the upper sources of the Jordan.¹ It was on one of the hills in this neighbourhood that our Lord's Transfiguration took place. This, then, was the northern boundary to which Joshua's conquests extended. What is meant by the southern limit, the Mount Halak, is not quite clear. There is no hill so named to be found; hence critics have fallen back on the signification of the word which may be explained as "the smooth," or "bald mountain." This description would apply to the character of the hills in the south of Palestine, towards the district of Seir or Edom, and especially to a range of naked white cliffs which cross the Arabah obliquely about ten miles south of the Dead Sea, connecting the mountain chain on the west with the mountains of Seir on the east.² This would be a natural landmark, and might appropriately be regarded as the southern boundary of the conquered territory, which would have been 180 miles in length, with a breadth, if we include the eastern settlements, of from 50 to 100 miles.

The chronicler proceeds (chap. xii.) to give a list of the kings conquered during these wars in the western district, enumerating them apparently in the order in which they actually encountered

¹ "Pulpit Commentary" on Josh. xi. 17; Tristram, "Land of Israel," 581 ff.; Geikie, "Holy Land," ii. 393 ff.

² Porter, *ap.* Kitto, "Cyclop.," and Keil *in loc.*

the Israelites. They are thirty-one in number—a significant fact which points to the conclusion that, in order to hold their own against their powerful neighbours, they must have had some kind of organized confederacy among themselves, headed by the monarchs of Jerusalem and Hazor, and probably in subjection to the great Hittite chieftain at Carchemish. A large proportion of these kings are among those whose fall has been previously mentioned, but there are many others not hitherto enumerated. The most important of the new names belonging to the southern league are those of Geder, Hormah, Arad, and Adullam. Geder is probably the same place as Gedor (1 Chron. iv. 39), now Jedar, seven miles north of Hebron. Of Hormah and Arad we read in Moses' time. The latter place is mentioned as destroyed by Moses in punishment of an unprovoked attack made upon the Israelites when they approached that neighbourhood; ¹ it may be that the offence was not fully avenged till Joshua included it in his conquests, or that he had to repeat the chastisement inflicted by his predecessor. The spot is easily identified. On a plateau seventeen miles south of Hebron, and twenty east of Beersheba, is an eminence, with remains of a reservoir and ancient pottery upon it, still bearing the name of Tell-Arad, and doubtless representing the site of the city then destroyed. Hormah is noted as the place to which the Israelites were chased by the Amalekites and Canaanites, when, after their rebellion on the report of the spies, they obstinately persisted in attacking the inhabitants in spite of Moses' emphatic warning. The name means "the ban," or "devoted to destruction," and was given to it after it had incurred this fate, its earlier name having been Zephath.² That it was situated in the Negeb, the arid district south of Judaea, is certain, but its actual site is much disputed. Some place it near the pass Es-Sufah (which serves to recall the ancient name) in the naked chalk hills that run in a south-westerly direction from the foot of the Dead Sea, rising above the level of the Desert et-Tih; ³ others identify it with Sebaita, the ruins of which lie in a mountain valley thirty miles south of Beersheba, and twenty north of Ain Kadeis (which is possibly Kadesh-barnea). It will probably be found more to the east, and nearer the south end of the Dead Sea. Adullam used to be

¹ Numb. xxi. 1 ff., and xiv. 45.

³ Robinson, ii. 591, 616 note.

² Judg. i. 17.

better known by name than identified in situation. When Joshua captured it, he must have remembered that Hirah, the friend of his forefather Judah, came from this place ;¹ we recognize it as the refuge of the persecuted David ; and late surveyors have fixed its site at Aid-el-Mah, a strong position with a good supply of water and practicable roads trending in different directions, in the famous valley of Elah. This place is ten miles north-west of Hebron, and lies half-way between Socboh and Keilah ; and the hill of Adullam is pierced with many natural caverns, in any of which David might have found a secure hiding-place. There are five other towns, whose capture is not previously mentioned. Bethel was doubtless taken during this campaign, though the details of the conquest are not given in this place. They are narrated in a previous chapter. Tappuah, Hepher, Lasheron, and Aphek are cities in what was afterwards known as Judæa, but none of them have been distinctly identified. This completes the list of the towns conquered in the southern confederacy. There are also some connected with the northern league which have not been previously mentioned. Among them are two towns frequently named together, Taanach and Megiddo. The former is the modern Tannuk, a village in the plain of Esdraelon, seven miles a little south-west of Jezreel, and five miles south of Legio or Lejjun, which is usually taken as the representative of Megiddo. It stood on a Tell in a commanding situation, which gave it sufficient importance to be commemorated as a strong fortress in the Egyptian records of Thothmes III. Conder strives to identify Megiddo with Mujedda, four miles south-west of Bethshean, on the eastern slope of Mount Gilboa, but the traditional site suits best the requirements of historical notice. Standing in the high road by which Eastern armies marched on their expeditions, commanding also one of the few practicable passes that led from the north into the hill country, the place has been the scene of great events. In the famous Karnak inscription Megiddo, under the name of Magedi, is mentioned as one of the cities taken by Thothmes III., after a great battle, and it has often witnessed stirring episodes in Jewish history. From its fame as a battle-field, St. John in the Apocalypse (xvi. 16) regards Har-Mageddon, the mountain of Megiddo, or the mountain of slaughter, as the gathering-place of the hostile forces against

¹ Gen. xxxviii. 1, 20.

Christ, and the scene of the great final conflict that ushers in the consummation. Another newly-named town is "Jokneam of Carmel," or, on Carmel, "the fruitful place," the park, most appropriately named, as it is covered with forest and fruit trees, and bright with flowers. The contrast between the rich perennial luxuriance of this hilly range, and the bleak limestone mountains, with their rough scrub and scanty pasture, of the rest of Palestine, has always served to make Carmel the type of beauty and fertility. It is a range about fifteen miles long, stretching from the mountains of Ephraim in a north-westerly direction to the sea, where it terminates in a bold promontory of five hundred feet in height. About twelve miles from this promontory on the southern slope of the hill, commanding the main pass across the ridge, stood Jokneam, now Tell Kaimum, a corruption of the old name.¹ Among the conquered potentates is one called "king of the nations (Goiim) in Gilgal." The expression reminds one of the king who with three others made war against the Canaanites on the plain of Sodom in the days of Abraham. He was termed Tidal king of nations, though it is probable that in his case *Goiim* is a misreading for Gutium. The Gilgal here mentioned is not the camp in the Jordan valley, but a place now known as Jiljulieh in the plain of Sharon, fourteen miles north-east of Joppa ; this seems to have been the head-quarters of certain mixed and nomadic tribes, here called "nations," which (to compare little things to great) were formed into a kingdom in the same way as the Austrian empire is composed of a conglomeration of divers nationalities. The last place mentioned in this list is Tirzah, a city which was highly celebrated in later Jewish history as the capital of Jeroboam and his successors, and from the beauty of its situation was taken by poets as the type of all that is lovely. So the lover in Canticles (vi. 4) cries : "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah." Conder identifies it with the modern Teiasir, a place containing many rock-hewn sepulchres, situated in a fertile valley, eleven miles north-east of Shechem ; Robinson and others fix on Tulluza, a place in the same direction, but nearer Shechem ; Dr. Geikie speaking of it as "shining out on a very steep hill a little way beyond the plain."²

Now when Joshua is said (chap. xi. 23) to have taken "the

¹ Robinson, "Later Bib. Res." 115.

² Ibid., 302 f. ; Geikie, ii. 221.

whole land, according to all that the Lord spake unto Moses," the statement must be modified by comparing it with the enumeration (chap. xiii. 1-6) of the districts neither totally nor finally subdued. He had marched from one end of the country to the other, and for a time checked all open resistance ; but there was still much land left to be possessed, and from which the inhabitants, if so it might be, must be driven by future operations, as opportunity should offer. The complete transference of possession was now rendered possible ; it only remained for Israel to follow up the advantage gained, and all should be theirs. But much remained to be done. In the first place, the powerful league of the Philistines, in the south-west, in the Shephelah and the maritime plain, with their five cities, Ekron, Gaza, Ashdod, Ascalon, and Gath, remained unsubdued, as we have mentioned above. They, indeed, are not named among the nations whose extirpation was enjoined, but in the division of the land their cities were assigned to Judah, though this tribe did not succeed in holding possession of them. Another people in this locality which were unmolested were the Geshurites, an ancient tribe, probably aborigines, who dwelt in the desert between Philistia and Arabia, connected with whom were the Avites. The district thus left undisturbed extended southward from Ekron to "Sihor which is before Egypt," by which is not meant the Nile (though the name, "the black river," is often so used), but to a small stream, the Rhinokorura, which is called "the river of Egypt," and now the Wady el Arish, and which flows into the sea at the extreme southern border of Palestine, after draining the whole central basin of the Jebel et-Tih, the desert of the Wanderings. It is, therefore, a natural boundary of the Negeb, where it turns to the sea shore, at about thirty or forty miles from its mouth. In the north there were also many unconquered districts. Among these was the maritime Phoenicia, defined as "Mearah that belongeth to the Zidonians unto Aphek," and thence "to the border of the Amorites," that is, the northern boundary of Bashan, the former kingdom of Og. The place called Mearah is not mentioned elsewhere ; but as the word means "cave," geographers have identified it with a remarkable cavern in the neighbourhood of Sidon to the north, where to this day a village exists named Mogheiriyyeh, and which in after times was fortified by the crusaders, by whom it was called the cave of Tyre,

The Aphek mentioned in this connection is a town on the western slope of Lebanon at the source of the classical river Adonis, now the Nahr Ibrahim, which enters the sea below Gehal (Byblus), about fifteen miles north of Beyrouth. Aphek, or Apheca, is still known by the name of Afka. Here was the great seat of the worship of Adonis, called in the East Tammuz; and the ruins of the temple raised in honour of the Syrian Astarte mourning for her slain lover may still be seen. The old legend told how, on the banks of the river, Adonis was killed by a wild boar, how the crimson anemone sprang from his blood, and how its waters ever afterwards showed the stain of gore. It is a fact that at certain seasons the river is considerably coloured by the admixture of a red earth brought down by violent storms of rain.¹ Milton has alluded to the story in his "Paradise Lost" (Book i.) :

"Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties, all a summer's day ;
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded."

This place and "the land of the Giblites," the modern Jebail, on the coast, twenty-three miles north of Beyrouth, were never occupied by the Israelites, and the idolatry enshrined there spread over all the country, infected the holy people, and was practised even in the temple at Jerusalem.² Other unoccupied territory is defined as "all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-Gad under Mount Hermon unto the entering in of Hamath." This latter place was situated in the upper part of the plain of Cœle-Syria, on the western bank of the river Orontes (Nahr el Asy), and is now called Hamah. The Greeks knew it by the name Epiphaneia, so designated in honour of the great king of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes. The "entering in" is to be understood of the approach to this district between Libanus and Antilibanus from the south, or, as others say, from the west. It was an important position commanding the whole of the Orontes valley towards Antioch. To this point the spies had penetrated; David was in alliance with King Toi, and

¹ Robinson, "Later Bib. Res." 606 ff.; Conder, "Heth and Moab," 76 ff.

² Ezek. viii. 13 ff.

Solomon actually subdued the territory, and extended the kingdom of Israel thither. But at the present time not only this region was not conquered, but also the district reaching from Lebanon to Sarepta, and the great city Sidon, retained their independence. Two other little kingdoms in the north-east were not conquered, and in spite of Israel's valiant warfare continued autonomous even to the time of David. These were Geshur, a city of the aborigines, situated north of Bashan, and Maachah, an Aramæan town near the sources of the Jordan, whose territory extended eastward. As two and a half tribes had already received an inheritance much larger than they could occupy, the rest of the community may have thought that they could find room without further molesting these inhabitants of the north.

The area of Western Palestine is reckoned at 7,500 square miles ; but from this must be deducted at least 500 for Philistia and other unconquered districts, which leaves 7,000 for the occupation of the Israelites. Much of this was only available after serious effort. There was a large extent of territory still to be subdued, on which indeed no attack had been made ; and of the subjugated country the tenure by the invaders was very partial and insecure, only to be maintained by careful watch and a ready seizure of every opportunity that might arise. The way was paved for the complete occupation, and circumstances were sure to give occasion for the furtherance of Israel's dominion. Wanton attacks on the chosen people were to be punished by the ban ; idolatry must be put down at any cost ; no treaty, or covenant, or intermarriage was to be made with the Canaanites ; the strife engendered by the observance of such strict and offensive rules would lead to the necessity of hostile measures, which would result in the gradual conquest of the whole country. The work of the combined forces of all Israel was over ; it remained for each tribe to make good its footing in the land allotted to it.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALLOTMENT OF THE EAST.

Age of Joshua—Principles of the division of the land—Settlement of Reuben—The Belka—Fertility of the region—Zerka or Callirhoe—Heshbon—Medeba—Dibon ; the Moabite Stone—Nebo—Aroer ; the Arnon—Kirjathaim—Sibmah—Beth-peor—Zareth-sbahar—Characteristics and fate of the Reubenites—Settlement of Gad ; its extent and character—The Jarmuk—The Jabkok—Jebel-Osha—Mahanaim—Penuel—Succoth—Ramoth-Mizpeh—Debir—Jabesh-Gilead—Rabbath-Ammon—Beth-aram—Beth-nimrah—Zaphon—Characteristics and fate of the Gadites—Settlement of the half-tribe of Manasseh—The territory described—Bashan—The Hauran—Argob—Edrei—Ashtaroth-Karnaim—Nobah—Salcah—Golan—Havoth-Jair—Characteristics of Manasseh.

THE conquest of Palestine even in its incomplete state had occupied some five or seven years, and Joshua was now nearly ninety years old ; it was time, therefore, that he should carry out the great design which he was appointed to execute, and divide the land among the tribes. We judge of Joshua's age by that of his comrade Caleb. The latter tells us (chap. xiv. 7, 10) that he was forty years old when he was sent with the other spies to reconnoitre the country, and was eighty-five when he obtained his inheritance in Hebron. The penal wanderings in the desert lasted thirty-eight years, so that Caleb was seventy-eight when the Israelites crossed the Jordan, and the campaigns that succeeded consumed, according to his account, seven years. Josephus,¹ indeed, allows only five years for the duration of the wars, but his numbers are seldom altogether trustworthy ; on the other hand, granting that the Jewish historian had the use of documents unknown to us,

¹ "Ant." v. 1. 19.

Caleb may have used round numbers which are not to be closely pressed. Joshua was one hundred and ten when he died, but how long his rule lasted we are nowhere told. Josephus¹ asserts that he was for forty years associated with Moses, learning his high duties, and after his master's death governed Israel for twenty-five years. This would make him forty-five at the time of the Exodus. Others² allow thirty years for his government. One of these periods is doubtless correct, and he must have lived in retirement after the allotment of the tribes some twenty or twenty-five years.

The division of the land had long ago been arranged by Moses, who had also carefully defined the limits of the territory to be acquired, which he knew partly from his own observation, and partly from the reports of others. In the last days of his life he had nominated princes from the ten tribes (omitting Reuben and Gad, who had already received their possessions) who should preside over the allotment.³ None of them save Caleb is otherwise known to fame. The particular duty of these chieftains was to determine the limits and dimensions of the portion which fell to each tribe. The situation of these portions they settled by lot, thus leaving the disposal to Divine Providence, and avoiding all occasions for heart-burning, envy, or misunderstanding. And certainly this result seems to have been obtained, as no murmuring or discontent ever arose, and no attempt was ever made to disturb existing arrangements, though particular tribes may at times have endeavoured to increase their territory at the expense of heathen enemies. The population which had to be distributed amounted to two millions; and, if we consider the area at disposal to be 7,000 square miles, they would be placed at the rate of 285 to the mile. In Belgium the proportion is 330, and in Holland 460 to the square mile. The space was ample. The wants of Eastern peoples are few, their habits simple, their houses small and furnished only with the barest necessities. Then the system of terrace cultivation practised universally more than doubled the area of productive soil, and each man's inheritance was sufficient to provide its owner with food and clothing. There is a connection, sometimes remote, sometimes palpable, between the blessings

¹ "Ant." v. 1. 29.

² Euseb. "Præp. Ev." x. 14, quoted in "Speaker's Commentary," "Joshua," p. 7.

³ Numb. xxxiv.

bestowed on the tribes or their representatives by Jacob and Moses, and the positions which they occupied in the Land of Promise.¹ The fortunes of his descendants adumbrated by the dying patriarch, and the glory and greatness of the ideal Israel celebrated by the last words of the lawgiver, are modified and characterized by their material environments. This aspect of the two utterances in question is not affected by the doubts concerning their dates excited by critics. Even if they, or either of them, can be attributed to the time of David, or even to a later period (which we by no means admit), they may still be used as intimating the idiosyncrasies, characteristics, and destinies of the tribes in relation to the districts which they inherited. Further, it is to be noted that the order and the relative dignity of the tribes, which were maintained in their marches through the desert, and in their military expeditions, controlled also the extent, and in some degree the position, of their possessions.

Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh had already, as we have seen, received their inheritance on the east of Jordan in a general way ; it remained now for Joshua to assign exact limits to the three portions. Preferring the care of flocks and herds to the tillage of the soil, and being the only clans which possessed a large stock of cattle, these two and a half tribes found in the land of Gilead, as it was vaguely called, with its rich pasturage and its many streams, a district admirably suited to their occupation. The first to have its inheritance accurately defined was the tribe of Reuben. Representing the firstborn son of Jacob this tribe had once been very powerful, but of late years it had steadily declined in numbers, and at the time of the allotment was one of the weakest. But it had never lost its love for pastoral pursuits which had engaged it in Egypt, when "its trade was about cattle." The portion now assigned to it was the most southern district of the Eastern region, bounded on the north by Heshben and its wady, a city and territory a little above the upper end of the Dead Sea, and just touching the ford of the Jordan, on the south by the Arnon, south of which the Israelites did not enlarge their conquests, and on the west by the Dead Sea ; on the east the inheritance extended vaguely towards those illimitable wastes which reach to the Euphrates. These wastes are bounded on the west

¹ Gen. xl ix. ; Deut. xxxiii.

by the mountains of Moab, which bore the name of Abarim ("regions beyond"), and are plainly seen from Jerusalem over the south shoulder of Olivet. The district thus assigned was called the Mishor,¹ the Plain country, in contrast to the wooded heights and valleys of Gilead, and the rocky soil of the west; it is now known as Belka, a region of wonderful fertility, of which Tristram writes,² speaking of the view from a hill which he supposes to be Pisgah: "To the eastward, as we turned round, the ridge seemed gently to slope for two or three miles, when a few small ruin-clad 'tells,' or hillocks, broke the monotony of the outline; and then, sweeping forth, rolled in one vast unbroken expanse the goodly Belka—one boundless plain, stretching far into Arabia, till lost in the horizon—one waving ocean of corn and grass. Well may the Arabs boast, 'Thou canst not find a country like the Belka.' Well may such illimitable wealth of soil pour forth its teeming myriads of flocks and herds, the riches of that mighty sheep-master, the king of Moab of old,³ as to-day of the Anezi and the Beni Sakk'r." "For pastoral and agricultural purposes the tribe of Reuben occupied the most favoured region in Palestine. The whole of their territory was a vast alluvial deposit of the richest character, out of which rise the knolls and ridges on which the old cities stood, and which are to this day abundantly supplied with the reservoirs and cisterns which had been hewn in them in old time."⁴ "Had the country been without these excrescences of rock, affording unlimited facilities for cistern excavation and for the storing of water supplies, it is utterly impossible that it could ever have sustained as it has done a vast resident and agricultural population."⁴

One notable feature in this region is the ravine of the Zerka M'Ain or Callirhoe, which separates it into two not very unequal divisions. This has been identified with Nahaliel, "the valley, or, torrent of God," which is mentioned (Numb. xxi. 19) as a station of the Israelites, and whose name may recall some Providential occurrence that here occurred to the wanderers, or may have reference to the Baal-worship of the district, or may be only the usual hyperbolical mode of expressing "a great, remarkable valley." And it deserves the appellation. The

¹ Deut. iii. 10; Josh. xiii. 9; Jer. xlvi. 21.

² "Land of Israel," 537.

³ 2 Kings iii. 4.

⁴ Oliphant, "Land of Gilead," 289; Tristram, "Land of Moab," 197.

gorge itself towards its eastern extremity is some 1,700 feet deep, thence descending another 1,600 feet to the Dead Sea. From its sides issue numerous hot springs running in channels encrusted with sulphur, falling in miniature cascades amid luxuriant foliage, to join at length in the main stream which fills the centre of the wady. "Tawny cliffs of limestone capped with chalk," says Captain Conder,¹ "rise on the north, and are seamed with gullies, where the marl has been washed down like snow streaks left in summer, beneath the cliffs. On the south is a steep brown precipice with an undercliff of marl, and a plateau stretching thence to another and yet another ridge; beyond and above this plateau (on which are the stone heaps of Machærus) appeared the shining waters of the lake and its western cliffs, fading away into a blue mist on the south. But the central feature of this ghastly scene of utterly barren wilderness was the great black bastion projecting from its southern cliff, and almost blocking the gorge—an outbreak of basalt which shows like a dark river in the valley of Callirrhoe, as seen from the west side of the Dead Sea. It resembles the high spoil-heaps of an English coal mine, and bears witness to the volcanic action which has made the springs in this gorge of boiling heat, and which no doubt accompanied the sudden depression of the enormous fault now known as the Jordan valley. It took a full hour to reach the bottom of the gorge, and the scene beneath was wonderful beyond description. On the south, black basalt, brown limestone, gleaming marl. On the north, sandstone cliffs of all colours, from pale yellow to pinkish purple. In the valley itself the brilliant green of palm clumps, rejoicing in the heat and in the sandy soil. . . . Of all scenes in Syria, there is none which so dwells on my memory as does this awful gorge, . . . the fair flowing stream which Herod sought below the gloomy prison of John the Baptist at Machærus—the dread chasm where the Bedawin still offer sacrifices to the desert spirits, and still bathe with full faith in the healing powers of the spring."

The fixed habitations of Reuben and the other Eastern tribes were of two kinds. The new settlers restored and fortified the conquered cities, and therein housed their families. Besides these fortresses, they had cattle-villages and farm premises, not enclosed with walls, and not connected with any large towns. These were scattered over the country in favourable situations,

¹ "Heth and Moab," 145 ff.

but could be occupied only in peaceful districts or at times when the raids of marauders were not expected.

Of the cities in this territory some are noteworthy. Heshbon, which afterwards appertained to Gad, and became a Levitical city, has had a varied history, which can be traced to-day in the confused ruins which occupy its site. Cyclopean stones which mark the era of the gigantic Emim who once inhabited it, Phœnician and Jewish masonry, Roman, Grecian, Saracenic architecture, testify to the different peoples who have at times possessed the spot. At an early period it had belonged to the Moabites, but when Moses seized it, it was held by Amorites under their king, Sihon, who was defeated by the Israelites at Jahaza, a place to the north-east of Heshbon, between that city and Elealeh, now El Al, noted like Heshbon for its great central mound. To the south of these towns, and lying on the great road through Moab, stands Medeba (Madiyahab) towards the centre of the Mishor, on a low hill about a mile and a half in circumference. It was strongly fortified and well supplied with water, as is evident from the remains of a great reservoir one hundred and twenty yards square. Though the Reubenites occupied the surrounding plain, it is very doubtful whether they ever got possession of the city itself. No mention is made of it in the list of their towns. Closely connected with Medeba is Dibon, or, as it was afterwards called from its occupation by Gadites, Dibon-Gad. This place has been identified with Dhiban, the extensive ruins of which cover two rounded hills three or four miles north of the Arnon. It has become celebrated lately by the discovery there of the so-called Moabite stone in the year 1869. This relic, says Professor Sayce,¹ was a stone of black basalt, four feet high and two broad, containing an inscription in Phœnician characters. It has been broken to pieces, and the fragments were distributed as charms among the Arab tribe into whose possession it came, but most of these have been recovered, and the monument may be seen in a tolerably complete state in the Museum of the Louvre at Paris. The block was found near the gateway within the old city walls, having been probably removed from its original position and used in some more recent work, whence it was dislodged not many years before its discovery. The inscription when de-

¹ "Fresh Light from the Monuments," 76 ff.; Tristram, "Land of Moab," 134.

ciphered proved to be of the greatest interest. The letters are written in the earliest form of the Hebrew alphabet, of which only one or two examples have elsewhere been found. The document is a record of Mesha, king of Moab about B.C. 897, telling how he revolted successfully against Israel, and avenged himself on the former oppressors of his country. We herein learn that the language of Moab differed from that of the Israelites no more than is the case with the local dialects of a country; that Chemosh the national god had come to be regarded as the supreme, if not the only, object of worship; that Yahveh, the covenant name of the God of Israel, was familiar to surrounding nations, the superstition which prevented the Jews from pronouncing it having not yet prevailed; and that the worship of the high places, contrary as it was to the law, was yet practised and performed in His name.

Meshu mentions the capture of two other Reubenite towns, Nebo and Baal-Meon, the names of which, owing to their idolatrous character, the Hebrew settlers had endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to change. Nebo is the name assigned to the flat summit and cairn of Mount Pisgah, and possibly of a town in its immediate vicinity. Though there are four or five eminences which contest the honour of being the one from which Moses bent his longing glance over the desired land which he was not permitted to enter, they are all placed within a short distance of one another, just south of the Wady Hesban. They are in fact the northern termination of the range Abarim, the rocky wall that descends in steps to the plain in which sleeps the Dead Sea. The late discovery of dolmens and stone circles on these eminences shows that they were centres of worship in prehistoric times, and that Balak's altars were erected on spots consecrated by immemorial usage. The most westerly of these summits, and the one which commands the widest prospect, bears the name of Siaghah, which is supposed to be a corruption of the word Seath, the Talmudic representative of Nebo.¹ Another of the Reubenite towns was Aroer, now Arair, situated in a commanding position on the northern edge of the gorge of the Arnon, where the Roman road crosses the river some fifteen miles from its mouth. The Arnon defile is now known as the Wady el Mojob; it is about three miles

¹ Merrill, "East of the Jordan," 243 ff.; Conder, "Heth and Moab," 129.

wide at the spot where the ruins of Arair are found, and 2,150 feet deep. Mesha is proud to mention that he made a road here over the Arnon, and doubtless the Roman viaduct, of which remains are still to be seen, was constructed on the lines of the old Moabite work. From the upper plateau the rift does not show till one comes suddenly upon the precipitous descent, the southern edge, which is of basaltic formation, being 200 feet higher than the northern, which is wholly limestone. Down this precipice a chariot road had been made in zig-zag, crossing the river by a bridge at the bottom, and rising in a similar fashion up the opposite side of the ravine. Above the bridge are some remains which may possibly be "the city in the midst of the river" (Josh. xiii. 16), by which cannot be meant Ar of Moab, as the Reubenites had no possession south of the Arnon.¹ Of the other cities appertaining to Reuben we do not hear much. There was Kirjathaim (now Kureiyat), on the southern slope of Attarus below Callirrhoe, whose dual-formed name recalls the curious feature, so common in this district, of a city built on twin hills surrounded by one common wall. There was Sibmah, now Sumieh, close to Heshbon, over whose wasted vineyards Isaiah and Jeremiah² lament in their denunciations of Moab, and whose rock-cut winepresses attest to this day the former fertility. There was Bethpeor, situated on the hills near the awful gorge of the Callirrhoe, in whose neighbourhood the body of the great lawgiver found its secret grave. And there was Zareth-shahar, a place utterly unknown to fame, but recovered in the ruins of Zara, which are noteworthy as containing probably the only surviving relic of the early buildings of the Reubenites.³ These stand in a little recess which forms an oasis on the shore of the Dead Sea about three miles below the outlet of Callirrhoe. The Hebrew name means "splendour of the dawn," and Mr. Tristram's description of the locality serves to explain the appellation. "The surrounding mountain crescent," he says, "is beautiful both in form and colour. The sandstone, gilded by the sun, presents the most gorgeous colouring, red predominating, but white, yellow, and brown patches and streaks abound." Concealed, as it were, in this remote nook, the remains of the ancient edifices have been but little molested by the hand of man or employed in the

¹ Tristram, "Land of Moab," 125 ff. ² Isa. xvi. 8, 9; Jer. xlvi. 32.

³ Tristram, "Land of Moab," 281 ff.

construction of later works on the spot itself; so that it requires but a feeble effort of imagination to people this quiet corner with members of the semi-nomad tribe, which raised these walls and houses for the shelter of their wives and families, while the men tended the cattle or pursued their warlike expeditions.

Settled in this rich district, and becoming engrossed in pastoral pursuits, the tribe of Reuben gradually isolated itself from its western brethren, and sank into comparative insignificance. Jacob had predicted: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not have the excellency"; the birthright naturally appertaining to the first-born had long been forfeited, and it is noted that no leader, judge, or prophet ever arose from this tribe. The sentence of Moses¹ is expressed in ambiguous terms, yet seems to be best rendered:

"Let Reuben live and not die,
Yet let his men be few."

Losing their patriotic spirit, thinking only of their own selfish interests, the Reubenites could not be aroused to take part in national movements; they could hear unmoved of the oppression of their brethren; they cared more for the welfare of their flocks and herds than of their fellow-countrymen. Requiring continually wider range for their subsistence, not confined to one spot by agricultural considerations, and in their unabated love of a nomadic life pushing further and further eastwards where they might find fresh pastures, they gradually lost possession of much of their original inheritance, cared less and less for a settled home, degenerated into a mere desert horde, or became intermixed with the Moabites, and faded out of Jewish history.

Immediately to the north of Reuben came the inheritance of Gad. These two tribes, together with Simeon, during the march in the desert, had been posted on the south of the tabernacle; and now the two in the allotment of land had to guard the eastern frontier. The territory of Gad, starting from Heshbon, extended northwards towards the Sea of Galilee unto the river Jarmuk, which falls into the Jordan four miles below the lake; on the west, of course, it was bounded by the Jordan valley; how far it spread to the east is exactly determined, as

¹ Deut. xxxiii. 6.

"unto Aroer that faces Rabbah," *i.e.*, near the southern source of the Jabbok, a line being drawn from some unascertained spot on the north-east border to meet that river. We can say generally that it occupied the centre of Israel's eastern possessions, comprising a great portion of the Land of Gilead properly so called, and that half of the Ammonite territory which had been taken from that people by Sihon, since the Israelites were debarred from attacking the Ammonites by the claims of kindred.¹ The area is reckoned at 1,300 square miles ; but the extent varied at times according to the power and activity of the Gadites. It was one of the fairest parts of this beautiful region. Looking upon it across the Jordan from the west, one receives a very erroneous impression of its character and capabilities. Far from being, as it seems, a continuous wall of mountains rising abruptly from the Ghor and presenting no softer features, the horizontal outline is broken in all directions by valleys and ravines, clothed with oaks, oleanders, and evergreen shrubs in richest luxuriance. And when the summit of these hills is reached a very different prospect meets the eye. Here is a high table land, extending for miles towards the Arabian Desert, and in many places less than a hundred feet above the plain ; here are undulating downs and picturesque glens, clothed with the richest grass ; here are grand forests abounding in magnificent trees, sycamore, beech, ilex, terebinth, and fig, with dark pines on the heights. The healthiness of this district is proverbial ; it was called by the Romans *Palæstina Salutaris* ; and to this day the inhabitants of Damascus and other Syrian towns flock hither to escape local epidemics.² These downs are divided by three deep defiles which drain them into the Jordan. The most northerly is the Jarmuk, now called Menadireh and formerly *Hieromax*, a stream of some size, being larger than the Jordan above Gennesareth, and draining the Hauran region. Mr. Merrill³ speaks of this wady thus : "As we began to wind up the gorge of the river, new scenes of grandeur burst upon us at every turn. One great bend in the stream was a mile in extent, and we could see the entire distance at a single glance—the water dashing at the bottom of the perpendicular cliff which rose three hundred feet above it, and still above that could be traced

¹ *Deut.* ii. 19.

² Oliphant, "Land of Gilead," 102.

³ "East of the Jordan," 141.

the narrow path along which we were to go. A singular effect, by contrast, was presented by the rock formation, as exposed on the face of the cliff just referred to, where a stratum, of fifty or one hundred feet in thickness, of pure white limestone was overlaid by one of black basalt, for a hundred feet more. . . . The valley is formed of a succession of wild gorges, high mountains on either side, perpendicular cliffs, bold, rugged headlands projecting into the valley, and small, quiet plains, far down out of the reach of mountain storms, fertile, sheltered, and peaceful." Further up the wady are the celebrated hot springs known to the Romans, called now El Hamma. The centre defile of the district is formed by the river Jabbok, or Zerka, which exhibits a curious course, making three-fourths of a circle. Rising in the south-east of Gilead, it sweeps far away towards the sunrising and the desert, makes a bold bend to the north, then doubles back upon itself, forcing its way through the mountains, and after a course of some seventy miles enters the Jordan something less than half way between the Dead Sea and Gennesareth. Part of the district embraced by this river is now called El Beja, and is famed for its encircling forests of oak and other trees, which, attracting the rainfall, make this side of the country such a wonderful contrast to the bare hills of the west. The fields and woods are never parched and withered ; the streams which meander through every valley are perennial, though, as in all limestone countries, wont sometimes to disappear underground for a time ; and the whole vegetation has a look of health and vigour which proves the strength of the soil and the favourable nature of the climate. The average level of the province of Gad is about 2,000 feet above the sea ; but there is one point which attains 3,600. This is Jebel Osha, a ridge in the north-western side of the Beja, just below the Jabbok, and so called in memory of Joshua, or, as the Samaritans say, of the prophet Hosea, who is supposed to be buried here, though we know nothing in his history which would connect him with this locality. The hill commands one of the finest prospects in all the eastern territory. From Hermon and Tabor on the north, all along the Jordan valley, even unto the lower end of the Dead Sea, the sated eye can range. On the west appear Olivet, Neby Samwil, the Samaritan mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, the Gilboa chain, the hills about Nazareth, Tabor, Bethshean. "Seen in the shifting lights of

an April day," says Captain Conder,¹ "this wide view of mountain and valley which opens as the traveller reaches the edge of the cliff is wonderfully picturesque and suggestive. The distant ranges, faint and blue in the afternoon shade, the strange peaks of the marl at Sartaba [on the opposite side of the river] and near Jericho, the dark line of the Jordan, the green corn in its valley, the warm hues of the sandstone, the wild-broom and cytizus, the thyme and rock-roses, the thorny bell'an [a kind of furze], and bushes of arbutus and laurestinus, which form the foreground on this breezy height, combine to produce a picture not unlike one in the highlands of Scotland, and remarkably unsuggestive of the burning east." Passing from the Jordan valley to this height, one changes a tropical climate with its rank vegetation for an Alpine region of pines and comparative winter.

The picture of the scenery of Gilead would not be complete without a glance at its flowers and birds. Captain Conder² tells us that he found many old English favourites in this distant region as well as many proper to the clime. He mentions clover, ragged-robin, clematis, lupin, anemone, corn-flower, borage, tulip, buttercup, vetch, cyclamen, marigold, also orchids, cistus, phlox, star of Bethlehem, broom, antirrhinum, honeysuckle, as familiar plants. Among the trees and shrubs, there is the styrax, the mock orange with its mass of white flowers and sweet perfume, the lentisk akin to the Balm of Gilead, the arbutus, and laurestinus. The glades are vocal with the note of the nightingale and blackbird, the twitter of the tomtit, and many another little favourite. Here are seen the jay, the hoopoe, the gorgeous roller with its azure wings, the bee-eater, besides vultures, eagles, cuckoos, and the other birds common to Syria.

Certain noteworthy cities fell to the lot of Gad, some of previous importance, and others whose fame is of later origin. One of these places is Mahanaim, "Two Camps," where the patriarch Jacob saw the vision of the host of God, and near to which he was met by his brother Esau. It seems to have lain

¹ "Heth and Moab," 181; Merrill, 194, 279. Captain Conder denies that Hermon and the Dead Sea can be seen from Jebel Osha. Mr. Merrill seems to have been more fortunate, and deems that this hill may well have been the spot whence Moses took his view of the Promised Land.

² "Heth and Moab," 188.

north of the Jabbok towards the east, but has not hitherto been satisfactorily identified.¹ Closely connected with this site is Penuel, "Face of God," where Jacob wrestled with the angel. Reasoning from the analogy of a similar designation being applied by the Phœnicians to a magnificent promontory on the Mountain of light, fourteen miles south of Tripoli, and the fact that the name Funeh (a possible corruption of Phanuel) is affixed to a valley descending from the mountain to the Jabbok, Captain Conder is inclined to see in Jebel Osha the ridge of the patriarchal Penuel. Succoth, whither Jacob journeyed after his interview with his brother, was situated in the Jordan valley a little north of the mouth of the Jabbok. In the Talmud this place is called Tarala or Darala, a name which is recognized in the designation Deir Alla affixed to a conspicuous mound in the plain.² As the Gadites were doubtless well read in the history of their forefathers, what a host of memories must these old-world places have aroused! With what interest must they have beheld scenes endeared by their connection with the lives of those from whom they boasted their descent! The northernmost city of their territory, Ramoth-Mizpeh, was also hallowed by early associations. If it was not the same as the celebrated Ramoth-Gilead, it is with much probability identified with the Galeed, and Jegar-Sahadutha, where Jacob and Laban erected their cairn of stones, "the heap of witness," at a village now called Suf, a little way north-west of Gerasa (Jerash), in which a group of antique stone monuments attests that the spot was once a sacred centre.³ If Ramoth-Gilead be not Ramoth-Mizpeh, the former must be fixed at Remun, five miles west of Jerash, on the slopes of the Jebel Ajlun. It was a strong and important fortress, the key of Gilead, and played a conspicuous part in later Jewish history. That it was neither Gerasa itself, the noblest ruin in all the country, but of much later date, nor the modern town of Es Salt, the position of which is inappropriate to the demands of history, may be regarded as tolerably certain. Between Mahanaim and the Sea of Galilee

¹ Its position is discussed by Conder, "Heth and Moab," 177 ff., and Merrill, "East of the Jordan," 433 ff. The latter places it at Khurbet Suleikhat, a ruin in the Jordan valley, a little north of the Jabbok.

² This identification, to which Captain Conder assents, is the discovery of Mr. Selah Merrill, "East of the Jordan," 385 ff.

³ Conder, "Heth and Moab," 176.

on the north-western frontier lay Debir, which is probably identical with Lodebar, the home of Machir, who helped to provide David with necessaries when he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. xvii. 27). Another city in the north of Gad, though not mentioned in the catalogue of the towns, is Jabesh, or Jabesh-Gilead, celebrated some years later as supplying wives to the moribund tribe of Benjamin, and likewise for its connection with Saul in life and death.¹ The name is preserved in the Wady Yabis which winds down the hills of Gilead, debouching on the Jordan somewhat south of Bethshan or Scytopolis. A ruin on the south side of this valley, called inappropriately Ed-Deir, "the convent," about six miles below Pella, is supposed by Robinson² to mark the site. The mountain road from Beisan (Bethshan) to Gerasa passes the spot, and the remains of columns show it to have been of importance at some time. The formidable fortress of Rabbath Ammon which stands at one of the sources of the Jabbok has been described by many travellers.³ The following is Tristram's⁴ account of the locality: "When the narrow valley had suddenly turned the corner of a knoll, it expanded into a smooth turfed plain for half a mile, completely shut in by low hills on each side. The front was blocked by a round and steep, but flat-topped mamelon pushed forward, on which was the fortress, and the stream flowed rapidly past it on the east, through a valley contracted at once to a width of 500 paces. The citadel was faced by another little valley running at a right angle into the main one, and was connected by a narrow neck with the heights on the left. On the other side of this neck another gully started, which deepened at once into a steep ravine, and joined the main stream half a mile beyond, thus almost isolating the citadel." This was the capital city of the Ammonites from whom Sihon had taken it, and was held for a time only by the Gadites, its original inhabitants recovering possession of the place in the course of a few years, so that its recapture occupied Joab and David with the whole force of Judah for many months. Few places surpass in interest this most ancient of all sites. The ruins are not only very extensive, but date from the remotest antiquity, the later

¹ Judg. xxi. 8 ff. ; 1 Sam. xi. ; 2 Sam. ii.

² "Later Researches," 319; "Samuel and Saul," 100.

³ See "David: His Life and Times," 126 f.; Oliphant, "Land of Gilead," 255 ff.

⁴ "Land of Israel," 545.

structures being reared upon the rough unhewn stones which were erected in prehistoric times. According to Ewald and others, Ammon was originally called Ham, and was one of the earliest cities built after the Flood, being so named by Canaan, the son of Ham, who possessed all this region. In the Jordan valley lay the city of Beth-aram, or Beth-haran (Numb. xxxii. 36), six miles east of the river, at the mouth of the Wady Heshbon. It is now called Tell er Rama, and was at one time the favourite resort of Herod Antipas, who rebuilt it and named it Livias or Julias. It is not improbable that it was at this place, and not at Tiberias, that the tyrant was celebrating the birthday rendered infamous by the murder of John the Baptist. Machærus, where John was imprisoned, was near enough to Livias to enable the executioner to perform his cruel office and to present the ghastly token during the continuance of the feast. This could not have been accomplished from Tiberias under two or three days.¹ In the immediate neighbourhood of Beth-haran, and nearly opposite Jericho, was Beth-nimrah, now Nimrin, a town of considerable size, situated on a copious stream, which is mentioned by the prophets more than once under the title of "the waters of Nimrim."² The only other town worthy of mention occupied by the Gadites was Zaphon. This has been identified by Merrill with Amathus, now Amateh, an important ruin and mound about three miles north of the mouth of the Wady Rajib, which enters the Jordan valley between the wadies Zerka and Ajlun. If Succoth be Deir Alla, the four towns, Beth-aram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, are mentioned (Josh. xiii. 27) in regular order from south to north. Modern research invariably proves the accuracy of the geographical details in this book, which are doubtless founded on careful survey and contemporary documents.

The sentence of Jacob concerning Gad was this, the import depending on the paronomasia, of which Hebrew bards are so enamoured :

"Gad, a troop (*gedud*) shall press (*gud*) on him,
But he shall press upon their heel." (Gen. xl ix. 19.)

The saying of Moses was more lengthy, but to much the same purpose :

¹ Merrill, "East of the Jordan," 383

² Isa. xv. 6; Jer. xl viii. 34.

"Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad ;
 He dwelleth as a lioness,
 And teareth the arm, yea, the crown of the head.
 And he looked out the first part for himself,
 Because there was the leader's portion reserved ;
 And he came with the heads of the people,
 He executed the justice of the Lord,
 And His judgments with Israel." (Deut. xxxiii. 20 f.)

The former announcement refers plainly to Gad's position on the eastern frontier, where he was attacked by marauding Ammonites and other desert tribes, and manfully resisted, and in his turn harassed their retreat. Moses speaks of the spacious territory allotted to Gad, the warlike character of the clan, how it received a share in the very firstfruits of Israel's conquests, how it took a leading part in the war, and loyally joined its brethren in fulfilling God's commands concerning the subjection of Canaan. Fierce and rude as the Gadites were, they rose far superior to their wild neighbours in civilization, and long retained their close connection with Western Palestine. From their ranks sprung some men of remarkable eminence. The heroic leader and judge Jephthah, the grand prophet Elijah, the generous Barzillai, were reared in Gilead. To the houses of Saul and David the Gadites showed devoted attachment. At Mahanaim Ishbosheth safely established his mimic throne ; here David found an asylum when he retreated before his son Absalom ; hence he obtained some of his most valiant warriors, who, in order to join this admired prince, swam the Jordan in the time of flood, men who could handle spear and shield, who had the faces of lions, who were as swift as the gazelles on their own mountains.¹ The constant hostility to which they were exposed from the tribes whom they dispossessed, or from those who feared their neighbourhood, developed their hardy, warlike spirit ; they pushed their limits beyond the territory allotted to them ; we hear of them overcoming the nomad hordes on their eastern frontier, and capturing enormous herds of camels, asses, and sheep.² We leave them at this time happily situated, able to hold their own, and still retaining a close connection with their brethren in the west.

The largest portion of the Trans-Jordanic territory, estimated

¹ 1 Chron. xii. 8.

² Ibid. v. 19 ff.

roughly at 2,500 square miles, was occupied by the half-tribe of Manasseh. It has been supposed that, finding themselves cramped in their western quarters, and overbalanced by their brethren Ephraimites, they migrated across the river and won for themselves new possessions there.¹ This, indeed, may be partly true, but it is not a correct account of the settlement. Moses had contemplated establishing a part certainly of the tribe on the east before the conquest of the rest of the country, confirming them apparently in their conquests, and deeming them best fitted to defend the passes of Anti-Libanus and Hauran. The tribe had greatly increased in numbers and reputation during the last period of the wandering. At the first census in Sinai its numbers were 32,200; at the end of the forty years it had grown to 52,700. The foremost part taken by Manasseh in the subjection of Gilead, and the prowess displayed in that campaign, designated the tribe as the fittest tenant of the difficult region which it was chiefly instrumental in subduing.² These Manassites were now no longer mere shepherds, cattle-breeders, or agriculturists; and it was from no love of a pastoral life that they elected to fix their habitation on the eastern territory. They had developed into hardy warriors, who enjoyed the turmoil of battle and the excitement of military expeditions, and were fain to hold with the sword that which they had won with the sword. That they were executing a righteous vengeance on foul idolaters was a fact that sanctified their efforts, and encouraged them in their arduous enterprise. There was evidently a division in the habits and occupations of the tribe. The smaller section, which had a taste for agricultural pursuits, and a quiet, industrious life, separated itself from its warlike brother, and cast in its lot with the western tribes, adhering especially to its kindred Ephraim. The Trans-Jordanic Manassites are described as being children of Machir, and effecting their conquests under the conduct of Jair and Nobah; and it seems probable that they added greatly to their possessions after the days of Joshua, and that the limits assigned to their territory are rather those which they afterwards obtained than those of the original conquest. The inheritance of Manasseh is described generally as the kingdom of Og, that is, the northern

¹ Ewald, "Hist. of Israel," ii. 281, 299.

² Numb. xxxii. 39 ff.; Deut. iii. 13 ff.

part of Gilead and all Bashan. Its southern border was Mahanaim ; but as the site of this place is still undetermined we may consider the Hieromax or Jarmuk as forming the boundary in the direction of Gad. Its northern limit was Mount Hermon, Damascus being at that time too powerful to be attacked with any hope of success ; the Sea of Galilee and the Upper Jordan bounded it on the west, while on the east it stretched far into the desert of Arabia. It included what was known in Greek and Roman times as Trachonitis, Ituræa, Batanæa, Gaulanitis, Auranitis, and in later days as Jedur, El-Lejah, Jaulan, Hauran. The best general view of the territory of Og, says Mr. Oliphant,¹ is obtained from Tel el Faris, the most southerly peak of the Jebel Hesh range, which runs to the east of Lakes Merom and Gennesareth. Hence the eye can range over a vast extent of plain and pasture-land, well watered, partially strewed with basaltic rocks, but capable of supporting countless flocks and herds. To the south the steppe stretches away unbroken till cleft by the gorge of the Jarmuk, beyond which the country becomes more undulated and woody, terminating in the lofty range of the mountains of Gilead. Looking more to the east we see the vast corn-lands of Hauran bounded by the hills of Bashan and the Jebel Druse ; to the north-east we look over the pasture of Ituræa, with the solitary cone of Tel el Hara rising about half-way between Merom and El Lejah, and forming a conspicuous landmark. In this direction the view is closed by the Jebel el Mania, beyond which lies the city of Damascus. South-west the plain for nearly twenty miles is more or less interrupted with rocks, and terminates abruptly in the precipitous shores of the Sea of Tiberias, behind which looms the irregular outline of the mountains of Western Palestine. The physical characters of the region are almost as various as its names. The extreme north was formed by the lower slopes of Hermon, an inaccessible mountainous region, which, however, helped to fertilize the rich country at its foot by sending into it numerous streams from its precipitous defiles. Below this, lying on the east next to the waters of Merom and Gennesareth, and rising to a plateau 3,000 feet above the latter, came the province now called Golan or Jaulan, from its ancient capital, Golan. Seen from the opposite side of the lake the district looks like a rugged mountain range,

¹ "Land of Gilead," 62 f.

but the hills visible thence are merely the supporting wall of a fertile upland, clothed with the richest grass, and once teeming with, as it was capable of supporting, a large population. Towards Merom this wall forms a series of terraces, on which a rich soil has been conveyed or has accumulated, exhibiting most luxuriant herbage and flowers of surpassing beauty. Along the outskirts of this region are seen magnificent forests of oak and terebinth. The oasis of the territory is the country to the east of Golan, the Batanæa of the Romans, the name of which recalls the ancient Bashan, though its extent is much less. It is a picturesque mountainous region, abounding in pasture and forests. Here grew the oaks, here fed the bulls and cattle that made Bashan so celebrated. South-east of this district, now termed Ard-el-Bathanyeh, comes the Hauran (Auranitis), "the Cave-land," so called from the extensive use of caves as dwellings by the inhabitants, who everywhere also stored their water and their grain in such artificial receptacles. It is generally a flat land, which Mr. Merrill compares to the richest prairie of his own America.¹ The fertile humus lies on the old lava beds ; and in a great part of the country, with the exception of a few volcanic *tells*, not a hill or stone is to be seen above the surface. Yet the buildings that remain, some of remote antiquity, were constructed entirely of the hardest basalt. Wood being very scarce, everything, even doors and joists, was made of stone, the principle of the arch being largely used to supply the carpenter's art. On the more hilly portion of the Hauran a large part of the population, says Mr. Oliphant,² still live in caves, most probably the same subterranean dwellings in which the Rephaim dwelt. These consist usually of one or two rooms excavated from the side of the hill, closed in front with blocks of stone fitted together without cement, and entered by a door of stone turning on a stone hinge. Where the dwelling protrudes beyond the subterranean portion, it is covered with a flat roof of stone and clay, which forms the usual lounge of the idler and the gossip. At Dra'a there is a veritable underground city excavated in the rock, on the surface of which another and later city has been built. Here are regular streets with dwellings on either side and openings for ventilation reaching to the ground above ; here

¹ "East of the Jordan," 333.

² "Land of Gilead," 103 ff. ; Merrill, 349 ff.

are shops very similar to those found in other Syrian cities; here is a great hall, the roof of which, composed of jasper, is supported by four pillars. There seems to have been no means of admitting the light of day to these dismal abodes. It has been suggested that, seeing the Troglodytes of this region issuing from their tomb-like dwellings, the Israelites called them Rephaim, "the dead," and that this term was afterwards applied to them in the sense of "giants," which it sometimes bears. North-east of the Hauran, and stretching towards the territory of Damascus, lay the most remarkable district of the whole country, the names of which reflect its physical character. Argob ("the stony"), the Roman Trachonitis ("the rugged"), the modern Lejah ("asylum"), is a grim and forbidding region of black basalt, lying to the east of the plain of Jaulan, about twenty miles long by fifteen broad. Elevated above the plain, and consisting of a labyrinth of rock and cleft, and crevasse, it forms a natural fortress which has made it a refuge for the oppressed and disaffected, whence the Government authorities have often in vain endeavoured to dislodge them. Here in 1835 a small body of 800 Druses resisted the whole army of Ibrahim Pasha, who after a siege of eleven months, in the course of which he lost 25,000 men, was forced to withdraw his troops, leaving the enemy unsubdued.¹ In strict accordance with the peculiar nature of the boundary of Argob, the region is usually designated by a Hebrew word that means "rope"; thus in Deut. iii. 4 ff., "the region of Argob" is literally "the rope of Argob," the term accurately expressing the abrupt definiteness of the line of division between this and the surrounding country. "The lava bed proper," says Mr. Merrill,² "embraces 350 square miles, and its average height above the surrounding plain is perhaps twenty feet. The bed in its outline or edge is far from being regular, but sends out at a multitude of points black promontories of rock into the surrounding plain. Through this rugged shore there are a few openings into the interior, but for the most part it is impassable, and roads had to be excavated to the towns situated within it. . . . The surface is black, and has the appearance of the sea when it is in motion beneath a dark, cloudy sky, and when the waves are of a good size, but without any white crests

¹ Oliphant, "Land of Gilead," 56 f.; Grove, *ap.* "Dict. of the Bible." i. 105, 298.

² "East of the Jordan," 11 ff.

of foam. But this sea of lava is motionless, and its great waves are petrified. In the process of cooling, the lava cracked, and in some places the layers of great basalt blocks look as if they had been prepared and placed where they are by artificial means. In other cases the hillocks have split lengthwise, or sometimes into several portions, and thus seams have been opened, forming great fissures and chasms which cannot be crossed." This uninviting tract was thickly studded with cities and villages, the ruins of which are still extant.

The number of cities that came into the possession of Manasseh is stated to have been threescore; but this seems to refer only to those existing in one portion of the whole territory, and takes no account of the other places of note included therein. These we may briefly mention. On the south-west of Argob stood the formidable city of Edrei, the scene of Og's final stand and slaughter. It was built on a rocky promontory one and a half miles wide and two and a half long, in an almost inaccessible position, with no natural supply of water, the want being met by immense subterranean reservoirs which still are the astonishment of the traveller. There is not a tree or a shrub in the neighbourhood; there is no access except over rocks or through defiles almost impassable, every convenience being sacrificed to strength and security. The city is now known as Edra; the Greeks called it Adraa; it was occupied later by the Romans, and the remains of their tenure are seen in an enormous mass of ruins; but many traces of the earlier inhabitants survive, while the works of their successors have crumbled to the dust¹. That the Israelites captured this impregnable fortress speaks well for their intrepidity and military skill, but was probably chiefly owing to the depression occasioned by the utter defeat and death of the king, and the want of any organized resistance to the invaders. Argob and its capital offered no inducements to a pastoral people; they were the proper home of a lawless and marauding horde; and the more civilized Manassites seem to have not cared to retain hold of this uninviting district when once the thirst of conquest was satisfied. Next in importance to Edrei came a place celebrated as a centre of the worship of Ashtoreth, the principal female divinity of the Phoenicians, and in many attributes equivalent to the Astarte of the Greeks and Romans. The

¹ Porter, "Giant Cities," 93; Merrill, 26 ff.

city itself was called Ashtaroth, and Ashtaroth-Karnaim ("the two-horned"), the latter name indicating the worship of the moon, like Horace's "two-horned Queen of stars."¹ It has been identified with Tel Ashtara, a remarkable mound above a gorge in which is the principal source of the Jarmuk, about twenty-five miles east of the Sea of Galilee, and fifteen from Og's other capital, Edrei. With the defile of the Jarmuk on one side and a deep chasm cleft by a waterfall on the other, and with three tiers of walls to guard the more accessible parts, Ashtaroth must have been practically impregnable.² In taking this place, the Manassites were treading in the steps of the conqueror Chedorlaomer in their forefather Abraham's time, when this monarch in conjunction with his vassal kings smote the Rephaim in Bashan at Ashtaroth-Karnaim. Of the towns situated in Argob itself we have but few accounts. One of them, captured by an heroic Manassite named Nobah, and called after himself Nobah, soon recovered its old name Kenath, and is now known as Kunawat. It lies at the southern point of the district, in a line with the lower end of Gennesareth at the distance of sixty miles. On the edge of the Wady Kunawat, a deep ravine with perpendicular sides, stood the ancient city, with a large number of dependent towns in its immediate vicinity. Beyond this stony region, still farther to the east, was Salcah, a large town built round an imposing hill, on which in later, if not early, days stood a strong castle visible from all the plain of Bashan. It is now called Salkhad, and though it appears but little in later Jewish history, being the frontier fortress on the east and a place of considerable strength, it must have always been of vast importance to the possessors of Bashan. There seem to be no tokens of Manassite occupation; and probably, like other of these towns, it was won by individual enterprise, and abandoned after a brief tenure. To the modern traveller the most noticeable feature is the site of the old castle, which is built in the mouth of an extinct crater, on a conical eminence in the centre, the bowl-shaped crater forming a natural moat round it. The hill itself is some three hundred feet high, and makes a conspicuous landmark, defining the limit of the territory eastward.³ The city Golán, which gave its name to the province Gaulonitis, now Jaulan,

¹ "Carm Sæcul," 35.

² Oliphant, "Land of Gilead," 84 ff.; Merrill, "East of the Jordan," 328 ff.

³ Merrill, 50 f.

has not yet been certainly identified. There is a tributary of the Jarmuk coming from the north-east which bears the name of Nahr Allan, which word, in Mr. Merrill's opinion, may represent the ancient Golan. In this wady the place of greatest importance is Nawa, which contains remains of vast antiquity, and may very possibly be the unknown Golan, as there is no other suitable ruin between this and the Sea of Galilee, and it stands exactly in the direction where this town may be expected to lie.¹ The only other places mentioned as taken at this time by the Manassites are "the towns of Jair," Havoth-Jair. This Jair by maternal descent was connected with Machir; by his father's family he was a member of the tribe of Judah, and seems to have been a most brave and successful warrior, and to have given his name to a group of towns which he conquered and colonized. The Chronicler (1 Chron. iii. 22) reckons these as twenty-three in number; in the time of the Judge Jair, the descendant of the original possessor, they are called thirty;² but the multitude of cities in this district was enormous; the wildest regions are full of ruins to this day; and the population at one time must have been remarkably numerous. Hauran alone is said to have contained a thousand towns, and in the other divisions which composed the province of Manasseh at least an equal number was to be found.

The blessing invoked both by Jacob and Moses on the descendants of Joseph cannot be readily assigned to the separate fortunes of Ephraim and Manasseh. The two tribes are blended in one view, and there is little that can be appropriated to the circumstances of the half-tribe with which we are at present concerned. The expression, "Joseph is a fruitful bough whose branches run over the wall," may point to the two tribes that sprang from Joseph, or to the luxuriance of Manasseh which led to his spreading himself in two quarters. Both of the benedictions refer to the exuberant fertility of the possessions assigned to the tribes, and are fully justified by the physical features of their inheritances. From Manasseh sprang the greatest of all the Judges, Gideon, in whose family hereditary monarchy was almost established; and in their frank loyalty and soldierly devotion to authority it was long before the Manassites succumbed to the degrading influences of surrounding heathenism, and quitted their simple faith and settled life for the foul fictions of idolatry and the lawlessness of nomadism.

¹ Merrill, 324 ff.; Oliphant, 71.

² Judg. x. 4.

CHAPTER IX.

ALLOTMENT OF JUDAH AND JOSEPH.

Arrangements for the further distribution of territory—The lot—Caleb's inheritance at Hebron—Othniel and Achsah—Settlement of Judah—Boundaries of the territory—The Negeb ; Kerioth ; Beersheba—The Shephelah ; Zoreah ; Socoh ; Keilah—The Hill Country and its cities ; Places connected with David's outlaw life ; Bethlehem ; Jeshimon ; Engedi—Characteristics and fortunes of Judah—Settlement of the tribe of Joseph—Boundaries of the territory ; its physical character—Complaint and pride of Ephraim—Inheritance of Ephraim : Shiloh ; Timnath-serah—Inheritance of Manasseh—Daughters of Zelophehad—Esdraelon ; Bethshan ; Ibleam ; Endor ; Megiddo ; Ophrah—Tabernacle removed to Shiloh.

HITHERTO Joshua had been supreme in command. His conduct of the military expeditions undertaken for the subjugation of Canaan had been shared by no one. The second great task, the allotment of the land to the nine and a half tribes, was entrusted, as we have seen, to a commission of ten chiefs under the joint superintendence of Joshua and Eleazar the high priest. The latter, as the representative of the religious aspect of the business, assumed the paramount authority ; the other elements gave to it the sanction of the military and civil departments. The distribution of the several portions was to be made by lot, in order that it might be recognized as entirely in the hand of a superintending Providence. The lot, however, determined merely the relative position of each portion and the tribe to which it fell ; the extent and limits of each inheritance were settled by the commissioners on due consideration of the requirements of each case. We are not told in what way the lot was taken. Probably there were two urns, one of which contained the names of the tribes written on slips of parchment

or wood, the other the names or numbers of the portions into which the whole territory had been roughly divided. Each tribal representative drew one of the tickets from each vessel, and his situation in the Promised Land was thus fixed. That the arrangement thus finally effected bore a remarkable analogy to the position of the tribes round the central sanctuary during the march through the wilderness, shows the presence of a controlling will throughout all the proceedings, which directs minds, foresees events, and does all things well.

The solemn casting of lots took place in the camp at Gilgal, and the tribe of Judah, as it excelled the others in population and military capacity, and as, carrying out the order of march maintained in the desert, it had led the vanguard in battle, was the first to receive its apportionment. But before the commencement of the proceedings a claim, supported by the elders of the tribe, was made by Caleb to have a certain inheritance assigned to him without the intervention of the lot. Caleb, as we have seen, was the only one of the twelve spies who joined Joshua in giving an encouraging report of the Promised Land, and was with him rewarded by being preserved to see the conquest an accomplished fact. From his being called "the Kenizzite" (Josh. xiv. 6) he has been thought to have been of foreign extraction, descended from the Edomite clan of Kenizzites,¹ and adopted by circumcision into the tribe of Judah. A further presumption in support of this opinion is found in two expressions used concerning him, when it is said that he had "a part among the children of Judah" (xv. 13), and that "he wholly followed Jehovah, God of Israel" (xiv. 14). But these arguments are of small force, and it is most probable that his immediate ancestor in the tribe was one Kenaz, and that his family was known by this name. He himself had a son or grandson so called.² Now this good old man comes before his comrade Joshua, the sole survivor with him of the Exodus, and demands from him the fulfilment of a promise made on their return from the exploration nearly fifty years ago. He recalls how "Moses sware on that day to him, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God." This declaration, though not expressly mentioned in our present record, was

¹ Gen. xv. 19.

² x Chron. iv. 15.

doubtless well known to Joshua, and had often been present to his mind as he retraced the familiar track of the spies in the course of his military expeditions. Caleb is fain to note that he is now fourscore and five years old, yet is not infirm or unfit for active enterprise. A virtuous youth had resulted in a vigorous old age, so that the senior could say simply, without boasting : "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me ; as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in." Then he prefers his request and asks for the district of Hebron on which his heart had been set ever since he had reconnoitred it in his earlier years. It was a possession which would need some severe fighting to win ; for the former inhabitants, and especially the Anakim, had re-established themselves there while the Israelites had been occupied elsewhere ; but the old warrior had no fears on this score, and felt himself fully able to make good his claim. If, as he trusted, the Lord was with him, he would find no insuperable difficulty in expelling the interlopers, however numerous or gigantic. Gladly did Joshua grant the request of his old companion, solemnly blessing him in his new inheritance ; and thus Hebron passed into Caleb's possession, the city itself being made over by him to the Levites, while he retained the land for his own use. What an important part this place played in the life of David is told in the history of that monarch. One episode in the conquest of the district is considered worthy of special mention.* Among the cities in the territory which had to be re-conquered was Kirjath-sepher, or Debir. Like Saul under the challenge of Goliath, like David at the assault of Sion, Caleb offered a reward to the brave soldier who should take and smite this town. The guerdon in this case was to be the hand of his daughter Achsah. Othniel, Caleb's younger brother, won the prize, there being at that time no positive law, and indeed no general sentiment against the marriage of uncle and niece. The wedding was duly inaugurated, and Othniel, according to immemorial custom, went with a cavalcade of friends to the father's house at Hebron to bring his bride to his own home at Debir. Caleb as dowry had given his daughter a possession which, like most parts of that district, was destitute of water. Achsah, who seems to have been a young woman of great

* Josh. xv. 13-19 ; Judg. i. 10, 11.

prudence, urged her husband to ask her father for a field which was better fitted for cultivation. Othniel demurring to make the request, she determined to do so herself. Riding by the side of her father, she suddenly flung herself from the ass which carried her, and falling on her knees, held up her hands in an attitude of entreaty. Astonished at his daughter's behaviour, Caleb asked her what she wanted. "Give me a blessing," she replied. "Make me a worthy present on this my marriage day. For that thou hast set me in the land of the south, give me also springs of water." The fond old father could not resist the bride's entreaty, and bestowed upon her "the upper and the nether springs"—a great boon indeed in the Negeb, but one which the unusual abundance in the vicinity enabled him to give. In a secluded valley near Debir there is quite a phenomenal supply of water, fourteen springs in all, some in the upper part of the valley, some in the lower, which never fail in the driest summer; the land thus fertilized became Achsah's portion.¹

Caleb's inheritance being settled, Eleazar and Joshua proceeded to allot the possession of the tribe of Judah. In defining the boundaries of all the tribal portions, the commissioners appear to have followed the natural features of the country, and these, which are unchanged in the lapse of centuries, can still be traced where the identification of frontier cities is at fault. Judah, he whom his brethren should praise, whose hand should be upon the neck of his enemies, to whom, when Reuben, Simeon, and Levi lost their rights of primogeniture, the father's sons bowed down,² received the largest inheritance west of Jordan, the area of his possession, as originally designated, including 2,300 square miles, being nearly one-third of the whole country. Starting from the lower end of the Dead Sea, with its treeless waste of salt-marsh, only relieved by the little oasis of Es-Safieh on the east, the southern boundary passed westward along the south side of Ma'aleh-Acrabbim, "the ascent of scorpions," the present Wady Zouara, where to this day those reptiles lurk under every stone; then following the great mountain wall above the wilderness of Zin, it trended south to Kadesh-Barnea, whence it turned abruptly to the westward till it struck the "torrent of Egypt," the Wady

¹ "Pal. Survey Reports," 1874, p. 55; Geikie, i. 360 f.

² Gen. xlix. 8 ff.

el Arish, which continued to be its border unto the Mediterranean. This sea formed the western boundary ; the eastern was made by the Dead Sea in its whole extent from north to south. The northern boundary is not so easy to determine. Commencing at the embouchure of the Jordan, it traversed the town of Beth-hogla, two miles from the river, now Ain Hajlah, with a lovely spring of fresh water in a verdant grove ; then passing south of Jericho, it turned up the valley of Achor, the Wady Kelt, by a famous stone erected to commemorate some achievement of a Reubenite named Bohan in the late wars, and then followed the usual route from the Jordan valley to Jerusalem, which bore the ominous name Adummim, "the red," in allusion, says Jerome, to the blood shed by the robbers who infested the spot. This is the scene of our Lord's Parable of the Good Samaritan, and it is not at all improbable that this fact has suggested Jerome's explanation of the name. But it is more likely to have arisen from some physical feature in the locality, and travellers have observed purplish rock and red chalk on the sides of the valley, which may well have given rise to the appellation. About two miles from Jerusalem the line reached the waters of Enshemesh, Ain el Haudr, the Apostles' Spring, just below Bethany ; then skirting the hill Ophel south of the Temple Mount by Enrogel, "the Fountain of the Virgin," so called because, as the legend tells, the mother of our Lord there washed His swaddling clothes, the boundary followed the valley of Hinnom, on the south and south-west of the city, mounting from the ravine to the ridge above the plain of Rephaim, the shallow basin, now called El Bukeia, which extends its stony slope to Mar Elias, half-way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Thus Jerusalem itself lay just beyond the original territory of Judah, unless, as some suppose, the valley of Hinnom be identical with the Tyropœon, in which case the city would have been divided between Judah and Benjamin. Skirting the ridge on the north-west of Jerusalem, the border was drawn to the "water of Nephtoah," the spring Ain Lifta rising above a village of the same name two and a half miles north-west of Jerusalem ; thence following the range of hills, it passed to Kirjath-Jearim with its thickly-wooded forest, whence turning south it took in Bethshemesh, Ain Shems, "the well of the sun," and Timnah (Tibneh), three miles to the west, so famous in after time for the exploits of

Samson ; thence bending toward the Philistine city of Ekron, and along the little line of hills running parallel with the coast, it continued some way down the Wady es Surah, past Jamnia, to the sea about eleven miles south of Jaffa. The territory thus defined, being about forty-five miles long and fifty broad, was of varied character and of great natural strength. It comprised four distinct regions. First there was the Negeb, the south, the dry land, which lay between the central hills and the desert. This is a series of rolling hills clothed with scanty herbage, but bare of trees and shrubs, with a look of barrenness about them which hardly gives promise of the fine pasturage that we know they afforded. Here the patriarchs had folded their flocks ; but the district was never thickly inhabited, the general scarcity of perennial springs rendering it unsuited for permanent settlements. There are, however, some thirty¹ cities mentioned as appertaining to the region, but most of them are of little importance and quite unknown to history, and their identification is more curious than useful. The writer in Josh. xv. has methodically arranged the towns in four groups, running from east to west. The first, consisting of nine towns situated on the border of Edom towards the south-west of the Dead Sea, contained none that are known save, probably, Kadesh-Barnea, and Kabzeel, the birthplace of David's loyal hero Benaiah, who may well have gained his reputation as a slayer of lions in this locality. The next group of five or six cities contains New Hazor and Kerioth-Hezron, the latter of which places has been identified with the ruins of El-Kuryetein, some fifteen miles south of Hebron, and is supposed to be the home of the traitor Judas, whence he derived the appellation Iscariot (= *ish Kerioth*, "man of Kerioth"). Among the nine cities of the next group, which lies more to the north, occurs the time-honoured Beersheba, than which no spot in all the land is more fraught with patriarchal interest. Still retaining the name Bir-es-Seba, still famous for its wells of living water, whose mouths are surrounded with antique curb-stones scored deeply with the action of ropes employed for untold centuries

¹ The number in the Hebrew text of Josh. xv. 32 is said to be twenty-nine, while there seem to be at least thirty-six cities enumerated. There are clerical errors in many of these lists, the sum total not agreeing with the details. This is owing partly to some of the towns having two names, but chiefly to the use of letters for numerals.

to raise their prized treasures to the surface in that thirsty land, Beersheba has never failed in its utility, or faded from remembrance, in all the lapse of time since Abraham digged the wells four thousand years ago. Though the province of Judah extended originally some distance further to the south, yet as the last important place between the desert and the uplands, Beersheba is generally taken as the boundary, so that the whole country from north to south is expressed in the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba." The fourth group, of thirteen towns, lay to the west and south-west, and contained Ziklag, a town celebrated for its connection with David. Such were the cities of the Negeb, or South land.

The next division of the territory of Judah was the valley, the Lowland, the Shephelah, the strip of country between the central hills and the sandy shore of the Mediterranean. This was rich in corn lands and orchards, and has been called the garden and granary of Judah,—a region of soft white limestone hills undulating in low waves towards the hill country on the east, and rising in fertile slopes to some 500 feet above sea level. "The wide straths leading up to the mountains are especially fertile; the valleys waving with corn and the hill-sides covered with olive trees, which flourish better in this district than in any other."¹ It contained a large number of towns arranged by the narrator in four groups. First comes the north-east portion, among whose fifteen cities we find two places connected with the history of Samson, Eshtaol (Eshua), and Zoreah (Surah), the residence of Manoah, on the top of a hill above the Wady Surar, about thirteen miles west of Jerusalem; the Canaanite capital, Jarmuth; David's refuge, Adullam (Aid-el-Ma), on the Roman road down the Wady Sir, which leads to the Wady Sunt, the valley of Elah where Goliath fell beneath the shepherd's stone; Socoh, now Shuweikeh, in the same valley, two miles south of Jarmuth; and Azekah, mentioned in the pursuit after the battle of Beth-horon. The second group comprises sixteen cities situated wholly in the plain, among which we note the Canaanite cities, Lachish, Eglon, and Makkedah, already spoken of during the conquest of the south; and a Mizpeh, which is not the Mizpeh of Benjamin. The third group, of nine cities, includes the southern portion bordering on the hill region. Here was Libnah, a fruit of

¹ Geikie, i. 30.

Joshua's prowess; Keilah (Kila), on a hill three miles south-east of Adullam, the town which David rescued from the Philistines; and Mareshah, once fortified by Rehoboam, and famous in the time of King Asa and in the Maccabæan wars; ¹ it is doubtless the modern Merash, half a mile south of Beit-Jibrim (Eleutheropolis), which was built from its ruins. The last group includes the towns on the Philistine sea-coast, Ekron with its dependent villages, Ashdod with similar appendages, and Gaza, even to the "river of Egypt." The above are the places of note in the Shephelah.

The third and most important division of the territory of Judah was "the hill country." Beginning in the Negeb below Hebron, it extends on the north to Jerusalem, being bounded on the east by the wilderness of the Dead Sea, and on the west by the Shephelah. The highest point is in the neighbourhood of Hebron, and reaches nearly 3,500 feet above sea level. The rock is limestone, and when disintegrated and mixed with vegetable matter is capable of high cultivation, which indeed the abundant traces of terraces and water-channels show that it once received. The appearance of the district is now desolate and forbidding, though there are still valleys here and there teeming with luxuriance, and the ruins on every hill attest that it once owned and supported a very numerous population. The cities enumerated in this section are arranged in five groups. The first comprises eleven cities situated in the south-western portion, among which we may note Jattir, which is found in the modern Attir, a ruin thirteen miles below Hebron; another Socoh, close by, and, like the town in the lowland, now called Shuweikeh; Debir, of which we have already spoken; Esh-temoh, now Es Semua, one of David's places of refuge; and Giloh, probably Jala, six miles north of Hebron, the native city of Absalom's counsellor, Ahitophel, and the scene of his suicide. North of these places comes the second group, containing nine cities, among which is reckoned Hebron. None of the others are of any importance, though it is noteworthy that Beth-Tappuah, "House of Apples," has been identified with Teffuh, a village still conspicuous for its fruit-trees and vineyards. In the next group, consisting of ten cities lying nearer the southern desert, occur some which are connected with the outlaw life of David. Here is Maon, now Main, on a conical hill, four miles

¹ *a* Chron. xi. 8; xiv. 9 ff.; *i* Macc. v. 65 ff.; Robinson, ii. 422.

east of Eshtemoh, and eight south of Hebron, where dwelt the churlish Nabal ; Carmel, a mile to the north, where Saul set up the trophy of his victory over the Amalekites, and Nabal held his fatal sheep-shearing feast ; Ziph, on an eminence rising above a maze of hills and glens, five miles south of Hebron, and offering a secure hiding-place unless revealed by treachery ; Jezreel, whence came David's wife, Ahinoam. Here, too, is Timnah, not the Timnah of Samson's story, but the place (now Tibna) whither the patriarch Judah "went up" to his sheep-shearers, and which lay nine miles west of Bethlehem and four north-east of Adullam.¹ It is remarkable that Bethlehem itself does not occur in the list of these Judaic towns. It is inserted with some others in the Septuagint catalogue,² but there are reasons for doubting the genuineness of the passage. We are so accustomed to regard Bethlehem with intense reverence and honour, as the home of David and the birthplace of our Blessed Lord, that we expect to find tokens of its eminent position in the records of old time. But the truth is far otherwise. It never played any part in history ; though strong by nature, and commanding one of the main roads of the country, it remained in almost total obscurity, and in Joshua's time had not become worthy of mention. The fourth group consists of six cities on the north of Hebron ; among them Halhul, now Hulbul, in a luxuriant spot on the road between Hebron and Jerusalem ; Beth-zur, now Beit Sur, fortified by Rehoboam, and often mentioned in the Maccabæan period as a frontier fortress of great strength ; and Gedor (Jedur), the home of two of David's heroes (1 Chron. xii. 7), crowning the brow of a mountain above the Jerusalem road. The fifth group contains only two cities on the west of Jerusalem, Kirjath-Jearim, known in early idolatrous times as Baalah or Kirjath-Baal, and Rabbah, probably the ruined Rubba in the hills eight miles south. The last group relates to the places in the wilderness, Jeshimon, that is, the desolate district between the mountains, here ending abruptly, and the Dead Sea. The region is not absolutely

¹ Gen. xxxviii. 12 ff.

² In Josh. xv., between verses 59 and 60, the Greek Version inserts a list of eleven cities, among which, placed between Theko and Phagor, is found "Ephratah which is Bethlehem." Another of the eleven is Tekoa, the home of the prophet Amos. The nine other cities are quite unknown to history, but they occupy a portion of the district which would otherwise be entirely omitted.

desert, but is destitute of trees, and produces only scanty herbage where watercourses afford moisture to the parched ground. It was but thinly inhabited, and contained at this time only six cities of any note ; and of these none are known for certain but Engedi, "the Fountain of the Kid," now Ain Jidy, celebrated in the history of David, and described by every Eastern traveller. It is situated on the hill about half-way up the western shore of the Dead Sea, opposite to the embouchure of the Arnon on the other coast. Here several hundred feet up the slope gushes forth a warm spring, fertilizing the soil around as it makes its way to the sea through the plain whereon lie the ruins of Hazazon-Tamar, "the Felling of the Palm" ("which is Engedi," 2 Chron. xx. 2). Living palm-trees, indeed, are scarce nowadays, but the trunks, preserved by the salt waters, lie everywhere on the sea-shore, and testify to what has been. On this plain, about a mile and a half long and half a mile broad, stood one of the oldest cities in Syria ; here Chedorlaomer with his fierce Assyrian troops overcame the five Canaanite kings ; here David hid himself from the pursuit of the relentless Saul in one of the caves of the neighbouring precipice. The "City of Salt" is named as situated in this district, but it has not as yet been identified. At the bottom of the Dead Sea there was a locality called the Valley of Salt, where the Edomites suffered several defeats on various occasions ; ¹ here doubtless this city lay.

Such was the possession of Judah as originally defined. Its dimensions were afterwards, as we shall see, considerably diminished ; but its position was by this curtailing materially strengthened ; and as a hardy tribe of mountaineers Judah held its own, and was not easily seduced by the evil associations which led its brethren astray. Its success in war and future pre-eminence had been foretold by Jacob, who in his prophetic foresight had said :

" Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise ;
 Thy hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies :
 Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee.
 Judah is a lion's whelp :
 From the prey, my son, thou art gone up :
 He stooped down, he couched as a lion,
 And as a lioness : who shall rouse him up ? "

¹ 2 Sam. viii. 13 ; 2 Kings xiv. 7 ; Chron. xviii. 12.

Then follows the passage which a consensus of authorities has determined to be a Messianic prediction of a very remarkable character, taking Shiloh as a personal name of the Messiah. The matter cannot be here discussed ; but it may be observed that the patriarch is designating generally the future fate of the tribe, and not specifying any individual member thereof, and that the name Shiloh is nowhere else applied to the Messiah. Of course such inspired utterances have a reach and a meaning far beyond their apparent scope ; but putting oneself in Jacob's place one sees that he is announcing only Judah's future headship, how that he shall lead the nation in the conquest of the Promised Land, obtain the submission of the peoples, and dwell securely in a very fertile portion.* Thus the blessing runs :

“ The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
 Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
 Until that which is his shall come,
 And the obedience of the peoples shall be unto him.”

Then the patriarch speaks of the tribe's temporal prosperity, of its herds, its vineyards, its pastures :

“ Binding his ass unto the vine,
 And his ass's colt unto the choice vine,
 He washeth his very garments in wine,
 And his vesture in the blood of grapes ;
 His eyes are red with wine,
 His teeth are white with milk.”

Moses' blessing is briefer, but grand and mysterious :

“ Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah,
 And bring him in unto his people ;
 Let his hands be sufficient for him,
 And be thou a help to him against his enemies.”

This may be a prediction in the form of a prayer that Judah may always return in safety from warlike exploits, being upheld by the power of God ; but it may also refer to the efficacy of the prayer of faith, how when the hands are raised in earnest supplication other aid is not requisite.

* See Briggs, “ Messianic Prophecy,” 94 ff. ; and Dillmann on Gen. xlix. 10 ff. in “ Kurzgef. Exeg. Handb.”

The fortunes of Judah are told in the whole history of the chosen people, blending at length in that of the Christian Church.

Having thus arranged the inheritance of the royal tribe of Judah, Joshua and the commissioners proceeded to allot its possession to the great house of Joseph. Though this family formed two tribes, viz., Ephraim and Manasseh, a single lot was all that fell to them, the half-tribe of Manasseh being closely allied to Ephraim to prevent the undue weakening of the former, if, in its divided state, it were far separated from its brother tribe. The boundaries of this portion are not stated with the precision observed in the case of Judah, and it is difficult to fix them with any certainty, but the following brief account will be found to be best authenticated by the text of Scripture and recent explorations. The northern boundary is not distinctly given; the other limits are more easily determined. Starting from the Jordan immediately opposite to Jericho, the southern boundary ran to "the water of Jericho," the Sultan's Spring, the scene of Elisha's miracle, and then by one of the ravines, the Wady Harith, or the Wady Suweinit, up into the hills round Bethel, thence to the Lower Beth-horon, past Ataroth-Adar (Khurbet Dariah), a mile to the south-west, unto the Canaanite city Gezer, and from thence to the Mediterranean Sea at Jaffa. Such was the southern border; the Jordan valley, up to a spot opposite Bethshan, formed the eastern limit, the sea-coast to Carmel the western. Along the watershed between Bethshan and Carmel, the northern line lay, but it is impossible to define it accurately, as it seems to have been constantly altered, the cities at one time assigned to Manasseh being at another attributed to some adjacent tribe. It is calculated that the whole territory extended about fifty-five miles from east to west, and seventy from north to south, a district equal to the area of our two English counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. It was emphatically a good land, in a secure and central position, rugged indeed, but "broken up into wide plains in the heart of the mountains, and diversified both in hill and valley by streams of running water and by continuous tracts of verdure and vegetation." The ancestral blessing was indeed fulfilled in Joseph's allotment:

^a Stanley, "Sinai and Palestine," 229.

"Blessed of the Lord be his land ;
 For the precious things of heaven, for the dew,
 And for the deep that coucheth beneath,
 And for the precious things of the fruits of the sun,
 And for the precious things of the growth of the moons,
 And for the chief things of the ancient mountains,
 And for the precious things of the everlasting hills,
 And for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof,
 And the good will of him that dwelt in the bush (Exod. iii. 2) ;
 Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph,
 And upon the crown of the head of him that was separated from his
 brethren."

This goodly inheritance was divided between Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh, the former receiving the southern and smaller portion. With the arrogance and pride which this clan always exhibited, they were not satisfied with the portion assigned to them. Relying, perhaps, on Joshua's supposed partiality for his own tribe of Ephraim, they come to him with a complaint. "Why hast thou given me," they ask, "but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as hitherto the Lord hath blessed me?" There is a delicate irony in Joshua's reply which the objectors do not fully appreciate : "If thou be a great people, get thee up to the forest, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim ; since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for thee." If you are as numerous and as powerful as you boast to be, take care of yourselves ; seize the vast central forests, make clearings and settle there. This answer did not content the remonstrants ; they murmur that there was not room for them in the mountains, and yet that they could not settle in the plains because of the war-chariots of the Canaanites, against which they could not hope to contend successfully. But such a plea found no favour with the brave and devout Joshua. If they were the people they supposed themselves to be, they must win further ground by their own exertions, trusting in the Lord, and undismayed by the chariots of iron which seemed so formidable, but had proved no hindrance to complete victory in former wars. The boast of the descendants of Joseph was indeed not ill-founded. At the first census they outnumbered every tribe but Judah ; at the second numbering in the plains of Moab, while Judah's warriors amounted to 76,500, the Manassites and Ephraimites together

were 85,200. But in those forty years Ephraim had decreased from 40,500 to 32,500, and Manasseh had risen from 32,200 to 52,700, so that the latter had a motive for effecting a settlement of part of its superabundant population in the east, but was thoroughly unreasonable in demanding more territory from Joshua in the present distribution, as its inheritance was quite in proportion to its numbers. But the jealousy of this clan, its keen remembrance of Jacob's blessing, re-echoed by Moses, its acknowledged pre-eminence since the Exodus, disposed it to be exacting and proud, and led to that disastrous rivalry which had such fatal consequences in after years.

The southern boundary of Ephraim has been already noticed. For the northern limit, Shechem (though itself in Manasseh), is taken as the centre, and a line drawn from that westward to the Mediterranean, following the brook Kanah which flows from the south of Mount Gerizim, and joining the Aujeh river enters the sea between Joppa and Cæsarea; eastward from Shechem the boundary, making for the Jordan, passed Yassuf with its springs of water, eight miles off, Ain Tana, and Yanun, and reached the Jordan valley at the prominent height of Kurn Sartabeh, which thrusts itself into the Arabah five miles above Jericho. It was a small territory, with an area only of three hundred square miles, but better watered than all other districts in Western Palestine, and therefore very productive. Very few cities are mentioned as situated in this portion. Shechem, on its border, has already been described. But there are two other places of surpassing interest. One of these is Shiloh, so famous in after time as the abode of Eli and Samuel, and now to become for many years the shrine and central place of worship for all Israel. It lay on the road between Bethel and Shechem, ten miles from the former, twelve from the latter, in an unattractive neighbourhood, on a tell which rises at the base of the hills where two valleys meet. A late traveller¹ describes it thus: "The ruins of Shiloh (the modern Seilun) stand on a low hill covered all over with a deep bed of loose stones. Belts of the chalky rock girdled the surrounding hills to the top, the strata lying horizontally, and boulders strewing the rounded summits. The natural terraces formed by the rock-beds were here and there planted with fruit-trees, but often left to thorn

¹ Dr. Geikie, "Holy Land and the Bible," ii. 198 ff. See "Samuel and Saul," p. 4.

and scrub. . . . Riding back to the ruins themselves, we found them on the breast of a low swell, beside the poor modern village. . . . The crown of the low hill was specially interesting, for it is covered with very old low walls, divided as though into the basements of many chambers of different sizes. Some of the stones were hewn, others unhewn, and some of these latter were very large. The outline of the whole was an irregular square of, say, about eight feet, with projections on two sides; the walls being everywhere very thick. Could it be that these were the stone foundations on which, as we know, the ancient tabernacle was raised? . . . No spot in Central Palestine could be more secluded than this early sanctuary." "Moreover," says Dr. Tristram,¹ "it was a central point for all Israel, equidistant from north and south, easily accessible to the trans-Jordanic tribes, and in the heart of that hill country which Joshua first subdued, and which remained, to the end of Israel's history, the district least exposed to the attacks of Canaanitish or foreign invaders." Sir R. Temple on his route from Bethel to Nablus speaks thus of Shiloh²: "After riding a few miles we ascend a slight ridge and behold an irregular plain surrounded by low hills. This is the Shiloh of Scripture. Most travellers will probably be disappointed at their first sight of a place the name of which has been familiar to them from their earliest childhood. The surrounding hills are featureless, and monotony pervades the scene. Some of the hill-sides must once have been dotted with well-built houses, perhaps the dwellings of the priests and their office-bearers. The peasants have now made use of the ruins in constructing the terraces for their cultivation; otherwise, the long-stretching slopes are bare of trees, shrubs, or herbage. The plain has some patches of cultivation, where the young wheat is just beginning to spring up. Riding over this little plain from its southern end, we reach at the north end a rocky platform, slightly elevated. . . . Here, on the plateau, stood the tabernacle containing the Ark of the Covenant. There, on the plain below, were assembled the twelve tribes under Joshua, while the land was being apportioned among them. There also, in succeeding years, the annual festival was held around the ark. . . . Its situation, in the bosom of the mountains, protected it from the hostile races on the east and on the west." The

¹ "Land of Israel," 162.

² "Palestine Illustrated," 149 f.

other interesting site in Ephraim is Timnath-Serah, or Timnath-heres, as it is called in Judg. ii. 7, which became the inheritance of Joshua and his family. If, as Conder supposes, this is the modern Kefr Haris, situated in a rugged and desolate region ten miles south-west of Shechem, it is quite in accordance with Joshua's humble and self-sacrificing nature that he should have been satisfied with so unpromising a lot, the very name of which ("the portion that remains") implied that it had not been thought worthy to be included in the previous distribution. Others, however, find the great leader's home and tomb at Tibneh, nine miles further south, where there exists a most remarkable sepulchre, to which we shall have to refer later. It is noteworthy that at Kefr Haris there are still shown three holy places, two of which are associated with Joshua, viz., Neby Nun, where we see the name of Joshua's father, and Neby Lusha, which is plainly a corruption of Joshua.¹ There is also in this territory a Gilgal, five miles south-west of Shiloh and seven north of Bethel, which is connected with Elijah's last days (2 Kings ii. 1), and which must not be confounded with the first encampment of the Israelites in the Jordan valley, nor with the Gilgal of Josh. xii. 23, which lay in the plain of Sharon on the brook Kanah.

North of Ephraim lay the inheritance of Manasseh. Its boundaries, which have been already mentioned, inclosed an area of 1,300 square miles, containing many spots of abnormal fertility. The land was divided into ten portions, in order to be allotted to the six families of this part of the great tribe of Manasseh. The male descendants were five in number and received five shares; the sixth family, that of Hepher, had no male heirs, but the last representative, Zelophehad, had left five daughters; how was the inheritance to be allotted? Were they to be passed over in the distribution, and was their father's name thus to perish? These women come before Eleazar and Joshua, and plead their cause. They remind the commissioners how their case had already been provided for by Moses, who had enacted that if a man die and leave no son, his inheritance should pass to his daughter (Numb. xxvii. 8). The plea is immediately allowed, and the petitioners, each of them, received their share of the land, and the husbands whom they married from the same tribe became the repre-

¹ "Memoirs," ii. 374.

sentatives of the family. We see here one of the many points in which the Jewish law contrasts favourably with Eastern institutions. Justice to all, whatever their sex or condition, was a marked characteristic of Hebrew legislation ; and impartiality in treating the claims of women naturally followed. One of the most valuable of Manasseh's possessions was Carmel, with its forests, olive-yards, and vineyards. The great plain of Esdraelon, which runs from the valley of the Jordan in a north-westerly direction to the Bay of Acre, is bounded on the south for the last three parts of its course by the range of Carmel, which culminates in the well-known promontory which formed the scene of Elijah's sacrifice. We have already (chap. vii.) spoken of the "excellency of Carmel" which made it a type of exuberant fertility, resisting, as it does, the drought of summer, and maintaining its clothing of richest green, in happy contrast to the parched and withered aspect of other localities. To this day the remains of rock-hewn presses and vats attest the former abundance of grapes and olives ; while the presence on the range of every flower that blooms in Palestine shows that the old beauty and fertility have not deserted it in modern times. In Manasseh's lot there fell some important cities. Of Shechem we have already spoken ; others, which became celebrated in later days, had either not yet been built or were still insignificant. Such were Samaria, and Tirzah, the beautiful, both destined to be capital cities. Their description and fate will be found in the later history of Israel. Other cities which appertained to Manasseh, though not all of them actually within his borders, were these. At the north-east extremity, twelve miles south of the Sea of Galilee, and four from the Jordan, lay Bethshan, in after years known as Scythopolis, and now as Beisan. It stood in a commanding situation on the crest of a slope about three hundred feet above the Jordan valley. On the west there is a stretch of verdant plain of some miles in length, watered by the stream of Ain Jalud, which descends from Jezreel. The old city was some two miles or more in circumference, and was surrounded by walls of black basalt. It had been in existence many years before Joshua's time, as it is one of the places visited by the Mohar in the reign of Rameses II., king of Egypt, the royal officer who was sent on some public business into Palestine, and has left in a papyrus still extant a curious account of his expedition. The

ignominious exposure of the corpses of Saul and his sons on the walls of this town, and their brave recovery by the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, belong to subsequent history. Another of Manasseh's towns, though really in the territory of Asher, was Ibleam or Bileam, a place not certainly identified, but probably to be found in Jelameh, midway between Jenin (Engannim) and Jezreel. A third city is Endor, the scene of Saul's necromantic episode. It was built at the spring (*ain*) of Dor, some three miles north of Shunem, at the foot of the northern face of Little Hermon, and two miles east of Nain, where the only son of the widow was recalled from the grave by the voice of Jesus. Of Taanach and Megiddo we have already spoken; we hear of them again in the times of the Judges and the Kings. The former, still called Tannuk, lies in the rich plain of Esdraelon, seven miles south-west of Jezreel. Megiddo, which commanded one of the passes from the north into the hill country, has been usually identified with the Legio of Eusebius and Jerome, the modern El-Lejjun, situated a few miles from Taanach, where the plain begins to rise gently towards the low range of wooded hills which connect Carmel and what we should call the mountains of Samaria.¹ Conder, as we have mentioned above, prefers to place it at Mujeddah, four miles south-west of Bethshan, at the foot of Mount Gilboa, a place holding the eastern entrance to the plain, where extensive ruins and a copious supply of water mark the site of a large and ancient town. The above five cities, together with Dor, were assigned to the Manassites, but were never held by them; and Joshua's ironical advice, that they should use their power in increasing their possessions, seems to have met with no response from these people, who wished to reap the rewards of conquest without the fatigue and danger of battle. Another site in Manasseh worthy of mention is Ophrah of the Abiezrites, celebrated some years later in the history of Gideon,² and now represented by the village Ferrata, six miles south-west of Shechem. The subsequent history of the tribe of Joseph is the tale of the great apostasy which culminated in the Babylonish captivity.

Hitherto, from the time that the Jordan was crossed, during all the progress of the conquest, up to the present moment, the tabernacle and ark had remained in the permanent camp at

¹ Robinson, "Bib. Res." iii. 177 ff.

² Judges vi. 11.

Gilgal, and the public exercise of religion had not been maintained in due form and order. It was time that this state of things was altered. The settlement of the two leading tribes, and the peaceable possession of the very heart of the country, pointed to the feasibility of establishing a central place of Divine worship which might also be a centre of tribal union. Already there had appeared tokens of jealousy and disintegration, murmuring and division of interests ; these evils could be averted only by a revival of national religion, a public acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God, and a general recognition of the outward symbol of His presence. Moses had looked forward to this time ; he had enjoined the people to use the first opportunity of rest from war in establishing a sanctuary, "a place which the Lord should choose to cause His name to dwell there," and to use that spot alone for all their sacrifices and offerings.¹ Always a pattern of strict obedience, Joshua now assembles the whole congregation, and with solemn ceremonial brings up the holy tabernacle, together with the ark and all that appertained thereto, and erects it at Shiloh. The reason why the primeval sanctuary of Bethel was not chosen can only be conjectured. Probably it was not permanently occupied at this time, and its late associations that connected it with violence and bloodshed rendered it unfit to be the national shrine, the symbol of rest and worship. What was the edifice which received this venerable memorial we are not told. Probably the level space, scarped on the rock at Seilun, and still plainly traceable, was surrounded with a low wall, over which area the folds of the tabernacle were thrown. Thus the tent of meeting, the monument of the weary pilgrimage in the wilderness, had found a fixed home, even as Israel itself had passed from a nomadic to a settled life. Henceforward the regular sacrifices and ceremonies were resumed, and to this easily accessible shrine all the people gathered at the stated times for worship and purification and sacred rites. This was the desire and intention of Joshua in establishing the religious centre here. How miserably this design was frustrated in after years the history of Shiloh shows.

¹ Deut. xii. 10, 11.

CHAPTER X.

ALLOTMENTS OF THE REMAINING TRIBES.

Renewed arrangements for completing the partition—The Lot of Benjamin—Characteristics of Benjamin—Boundaries of the territory—Physical peculiarities—Its cities ; Ekron ; Gaba ; Ramah—Fortunes of Benjamin—The Lot of Simeon—Characteristics—Cities assigned; Moladah; Ziklag ; Beth-Marcaboth—Fate of the tribe—The Lot of Zebulun—Limits of the territory—Places on the border-lines—Character of the tribe and its territory—The Lot of Issachar—Plain of Esraelon—Cities of Issachar ; Jezreel ; Shunem ; Engannim—Characteristics and fortunes of the tribe—The Lot of Asher—Limits of the territory—The Crocodile River—Towns of Asher ; Hammon ; Tyre—Characteristics and fortunes of the tribe—The Lot of Naphtali ; its limits—Cities of Naphtali ; Tiberias ; Chinnereth ; Kedesh ; Magdala—Nature of the country—Fortunes of the tribe—The Lot of Dan—Limits of the territory—Its towns: Ajalon ; Mahaneh-Dan—Expedition to the north—Seizure of Laish—Characteristics and history of the tribe—Joshua's inheritance.

FIVE of the twelve tribes had now received their inheritance. The Levites were not destined to be settled in this manner ;¹ the Lord God was their inheritance. The remaining seven had to be provided for. These seemed to be in no hurry to secure settled homes. Either the nomad life had still superior charms for them, or they shrank from the labour and danger which were involved in the occupation of their possessions and the extermination of the old inhabitants. The houses of Judah and Joseph were selfishly satisfied with the inheritance which had fallen to them, and made no movement to effect the settlement of the weaker tribes, or else were so thoroughly occupied with their own concerns that they had no time to bestow on the affairs of their brethren. It was expedient that

¹ See Josh. xiii. 14, 33 ; xviii. 7.

these should be roused from their apathy, and take their share in the country. Joshua could not rest till the work of allotment was completed. To his active mind, which saw in every duty an immediate and imperative claim, backwardness in the execution of a heavenly design was a grievous sin. He chides these indolent tribes : " How long are ye slack," he asks, indignantly, " to go in to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you ? " The longer they delayed, the more loath would they be to alter their mode of life, and the more serious would be the difficulties in the way of occupation. But before this land could be equitably divided a survey must be made, and a report prepared as a guide in the distribution. To obviate all jealousy, and to insure perfect impartiality, Joshua directed these seven tribes to choose twenty-one commissioners, three from each tribe, who should examine the country still unassigned, note the physical characteristics of each district and the number and size of the various cities situated therein, and present their report when completed to him at Shiloh. Then the lot should determine the position of each tribe, while the information obtained by the survey would enable Joshua and the elders to apportion the territory in accordance with their population and habits. The proposed arrangement was duly carried into effect, and on the return of the commissioners, who completed their work without hindrance from the old inhabitants, the lot was cast with the utmost formality before the Lord in the tabernacle, and the seven portions into which the country was divided were severally distributed. On further investigation it was found that the allotments of Judah and Joseph needed some changes and modifications, which were accordingly made without dispute or difficulty.

From the shaken urn the first lot that came forth was that of Benjamin, and his place was between Judah and Ephraim, thus forming the link between the two great rival houses of Joseph and Judah, even as in old ancestral times the long-estranged brothers were united by their mutual affection for their father's youngest and best beloved son. In the encampment in the wilderness Benjamin had always been associated with Ephraim and Manasseh, these three clans guarding the west, as Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun defended the east ; and up to the time of David, Benjamin attached itself closely to Ephraim, and

formed the real fighting portion of the confederacy of Joseph. "Benjamin is a wolf that ravineth," said Jacob ;

" In the morning he shall devour the prey,
And at even he shall divide the spoil."

Thus did the patriarch adumbrate the warlike character of this tribe, and the remarkable skill in military exercises which it displayed. The men who were so expert in the use of sling and bow, who could make the left hand do the work of the right, who were daunted by no peril, and rejoiced in the fierce onslaught, and were familiar with all the usages of war, such men, though comparatively few in number, were of great value and importance, and their adhesion to any cause afforded the best promise of success. The blessing of Moses referred to something higher and nobler than military prowess, pointing to Benjamin's connection with Judah and participation in the Divine Presence through the temple at Jerusalem. Moses speaks of him as a beloved son carried by his father :

" The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him ;
He covereth him all the day long,
And he dwelleth between his shoulders."

And it has been noted that the lot of Benjamin fell in Jerusalem "between the shoulders," *i.e.*, the rocky sides of the ravines which encompass the city on the west, south, and east.

Starting from the Jordan on the east, the northern boundary of Benjamin coincided with the southern of Ephraim, as its southern followed the line of the north of Judah. Of the Arabah itself Benjamin held a stretch of five miles from the plain of Jericho to the point where the Aujah falls in. The territory extended westward past Beth-horon and as far as the Canaanite city of Gezer, where, turning south, it met the southern boundary at Kirjath-Jearim. Jerusalem itself, as we have seen, lay on the boundary line. It was but a small territory, a parallelogram containing some four hundred square miles, not nearly as large as Bedfordshire, but of importance by no means in proportion to its size. This importance arose from its physical peculiarities and from the notable cities which were situated within its confines. The general level of the district is very high, ranging from 2,000 feet above sea level to

3,000 above the Arabah ; and it is remarkable for the number of more or less isolated eminences upon which strong cities were built, or which played a distinguished part in the tribe's history. Hence we find many names of places which indicate this peculiarity, as Gibeah ("hill"), Mizpeh ("watch-tower"), Ramah ("height"), all of which were of strategic importance.

The chief passes, both from the plains of Philistia and from the Jordan valley into the interior, are found in the lot of Benjamin, the former of gradual and gentle ascent, the latter rocky and precipitous. Held by warlike mountaineers, these secured the independence of the inhabitants. It was up the pass behind Jericho, as we have seen, that Joshua and his host marched to Ai and Bethel ; it was down the pass of Beth-horon to the valley of Ajalon that the Canaanites were driven in disastrous panic on the memorable day that was commemorated in the Book of Jasher. Many of the twenty-six cities in this inheritance are familiar to us all, and have already been noticed ; such as Jericho, Bethel, "Jebus which is Jerusalem," Gibeon, Ai. Others are of less certain identification. Beth-arabah, as its name implies, lay in the Jordan valley, and was somewhere in the immediate vicinity of Jericho. Ophrah is not the town of Gideon (Judg. vi.), but is probably the same place as Ephron, or Ephraim,¹ and is identified with Tayibeh, a village on a high tell four miles north-east of Bethel. Gaba ("height"), or Geba, is not the Geba or Gibeah of Saul, which is to be found in the lofty and isolated Tuleil-el-Ful, about five miles north of Jerusalem, but is probably the modern Jeba, which is situated on an eminence of a broad ridge opposite and above Michmash (Mukhmas), two miles east of Ramah (er-Ram). This Ramah, which must not be confounded with Samuel's home, Ramathaim-Zophim, stood on an isolated hill commanding the road to the pass of Michmash, the key of Central Palestine. "It was here," says Dr. Geikie,² "at the frontier town of Benjamin, that the Chaldaeans collected their prisoners before marching them off through the pass of Michmash to Babylon—a circumstance used by Jeremiah with the finest effect, when he supposes the spirit of Rachel, the mother of the tribe, to have left her tomb by the wayside, near Bethel,³

¹ 2 Chron. xii. 19 ; John xi. 54. See also 1 Sam. xiii. 17.

² "Holy Land and the Bible," ii. 171.

³ So in the text, but ought not this to be Bethlehem ? Gen. xxxv. 16, 19.

to grieve in mid-air over the unreturning throng." (Jer. xxxi. 15). Beeroth, one of the cities in alliance with Gibeon, is the modern el-Bireh ; it was the residence of the murderers of Ishbosheth. Mizpeh is probably the conspicuous hill, Neby Samwil ; Chephirah (Kefireh) is another of the cities of the Gibeonite league ; Irpeel is supposed to be Rafat, a village one mile and a half north of Gibeon ; and Zelah, the burial-place of Saul and Jonathan, is recognized in Beit Jala, which lies south of the plain of Rephaim. In the catalogue of conquered cities in the inscriptions at Karnak occurs Tsalla, which may well represent Tzela.

The fortunes of Benjamin are closely connected with its geographical position. In spite of the small extent of the territory and its mountainous character there were numerous spots of great fertility, and it was quite able to support its inhabitants without being indebted to external assistance. This self-sufficiency and the natural strength of their district fostered a spirit of independence which was often put to the test. Secured by the possession of its passes and heights, and relying on the courage and dexterity of its warriors, the tribe of Benjamin for a certain time successfully resisted the whole power of Israel arrayed against them.¹ Ehud, the judge who delivered the land from the oppression of the Moabites, was a man of this tribe ; so was Saul the first king ; the great holy places, Bethel, Mizpeh, Kirjath-jearim, were in Benjamin ; hence the nation learned to associate this tribe with notions of power and sanctity. The connection with Ephraim was only gradually weakened ; but the mutual possession of Jerusalem and the common property in the temple, from the time of David and Solomon, cemented the alliance with Judah, and henceforward the history of Benjamin is merged in that of its powerful and dominant sister tribe.

In the orderly march in the wilderness the south side was taken by Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, and now the sacred lot appropriately fixed the position of Simeon in an analogous direction. This tribe had greatly declined from its early pre-eminence, for whereas in the first census its warriors numbered 59,300, in the second battle-roll at the end of the forty years' wandering, they amounted only to 22,200. The judgment on Simeon and Levi for their cruelty and treachery in the

¹ Judg. xx. ; xxi.

slaughter of the Shechemites, and on other occasions not recorded, was the same ; but while it turned into a blessing in the case of the latter, it was fulfilled by the entire effacement of the former. Jacob had said :

" Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce,
And their wrath, for it was cruel ;
I will divide them in Jacob,
And scatter them in Israel."

And when Moses gives his prophetical blessing to the tribes, he entirely omits Simeon from his view, either because this tribe had been chiefly implicated in the idolatrous and licentious proceedings at Shittim, and had suffered fatally in the mortality with which those crimes were punished (Numb. xxv.), or (if the blessing in its present form be considered a later production) because it had wholly disappeared as a separate clan. Now, in the assignment of an inheritance, Simeon received not so much a definite portion of the country as rather certain cities with their surrounding lands, and these within the limits originally allotted to Judah ; and thus the chronicler does not attempt to specify the boundaries, as in the case of the other territories, but merely enumerates the cities which were made over to the tribe. Judah doubtless had by this time discovered that its portion was larger than it required, and that it could not colonize and hold the whole region which had been assigned. When, therefore, the lot defined Simeon's position in the south, Judah gladly made over some of its towns to this fierce tribe, which would thus guard the southern frontier of the country, and be a barrier against the incursions of the wild desert hordes, then, as now, a constant danger. The cities assigned to Simeon were thirteen or fourteen in number, situated chiefly in the Negeb, many of them being occupied conjointly with Judah, and hence ascribed sometimes to one tribe, sometimes to the other. It seems that Israel's possessions extended much further to the south towards the Sinaitic Peninsula than is usually supposed, and that far from being a barren, parched upland, without life or vegetation, the region was filled with cities whose inhabitants found labour rewarded with all that was necessary for support and comfort. In the Simeonite territory lay Beersheba, and the town of Sheba, which was spread over the low hills bordering the wady on its northern

edge; and twelve miles to the east Moladah (el-Milh), with its two fine wells, at the foot of the hill on which the town was built.¹ Hormah was jointly conquered by the two tribes, and its name changed from Zephath, the new appellation (*=the devoted*) denoting the utter destruction which it experienced when first seized. Ziklag, David's temporary home, one of the Simeonite cities, is placed by some at Zuheilika, on one of three low hills on the upper side of the Wady es Sheria, eleven miles east-south-east from Gaza, and nineteen south-west from Beit Jibrin;² others find it at Ashij, some way south-west of Moladah. Two other places, Beth-marcaboth, "House of Chariots," and Hazar-susah, "Village of Horses," are noteworthy as indicating, according to Stanley, dépôts and stations for horses and chariots, such as went to and from Egypt in Solomon's time. These towns are named, in chap. xv. 31, Madmannah and Sansannah, the former of which is recognized in el-Minyay, a village on the old pilgrim road, a few miles south of Gaza. The other towns which, with the appendant villages and the surrounding country, were assigned to Simeon, are of little importance and of doubtful identification. One is called Ramath of the South, and is probably the same place as Baalath-Beer ("Lady of the Well"), a title which has a curious mediæval sound, and is thought to be the modern Kurnub, a ruin on a range of low hills some twenty miles south-east of Beersheba. On the others we need not linger. Nor is there much to be said concerning the fortunes of Simeon. The tribe struggled for a time to preserve its individuality, and even after David's days asserted its independence, and made conquests in the south;³ but it exerted no influence in the history of the nation, relapsed more and more into barbarism, and, overborne by the ever-increasing power of Judah, retreated further and further into the wilderness, and in the end resumed nomadic habits. A portion of the clan seems to have migrated to Petra, or the mountains of Edom, and travellers note that to this day there are so-called "sons of Israel" in these hills who hold themselves aloof from the Arabs of the desert, and are plainly a

¹ Geikie, i. 265.

² So Conder and Kitchener, and Geikie in his text (i. 352), but in his map he places it some twelve miles south of Beersheba.

³ 1 Chron. iv. 38 ff.

distinct race, which may be the lineal descendants of these emigrant Simeonites.¹

We come now to the settlement of the four tribes in the northern part of the country. The first of these to obtain an inheritance was Zebulun, which had been associated with Judah and Issachar in the wilderness. Josephus² makes their possession extend from the Lake of Gennesareth to Carmel and the sea. This is in due accordance with the prediction of Jacob :

“Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea ;
And he shall be for an haven of ships ;
And his border shall be upon Zidon.”

To the same effect is the blessing of Moses, who bids Zebulun rejoice in its commercial enterprise, “its going out,” and says that it and Issachar

“Shall suck the abundance of the seas,
And the hidden treasures of the sand ;”

the final clause possibly referring to the manufacture of glass which was carried on in very early times along the Phœnician coast. Though this tribe was numerous, surpassed only by Simeon, Dan, and Judah at the first census, when it amounted to 57,000, and at the last reaching 60,500, the territory allotted to it was one of the smallest, being about equal to that of Ephraim. The southern border started from a central point named Sarid, which Conder supposes to be Tell Shadud, an extensive ruin on the northern side of the plain of Esdraelon, four miles and a half south-west of Nazareth. Westward from Sarid the border, touching the torrent Kishon, reached Jokneam, which is identified with Tell Kainon, a large mound at the foot of the eastern end of Mount Carmel ; whether it actually extended to the sea is doubtful ; if it did, it must have passed the base of Carmel on the northern side. The probability is that Asher interposed between Zebulun and the Mediterranean. Eastward from Sarid the first point named is Chisloth-Tabor, “the flanks of Tabor,” the classical Chasalus, and now Iksal, a rocky height on the north-west side of the

¹ Obad. 19 ; and Pusey’s “Comment.”

² “Ant.” vi. 1. 22.

base of Tabor; thence the boundary ascended to Japhia (Yafa), two miles south of Nazareth (a town never named in the Old Testament), in a maze of lovely glens filled with hawthorn, dwarf-oak, and wild pear-trees. The next place reached was Gittah-hepher or Gath-hepher, now el-Meshhad, four miles north-north-east of Nazareth, on the road to Tiberias, the birthplace of the prophet Jonah, and, as old tradition tells, the site of his sepulchre; a little further on it took in Rimmon, now Rummaneh, situated on the plain el-Buttauf, turning northward along the Lake of Gennesaret as far as Hannathon, which some would identify with Kanal-el-Jelil, the Cana of Galilee, the scene of the Saviour's first miracle, while others see it in Deir Hanna, a village six miles north of Rimmon. Hence the northern boundary turned westwards, descending by the valley of Iphtah-el, the Jotapata of Josephus,¹ the name of which survives in the modern Jephat, a village about six miles down the valley here called Wady Abellin. It is impossible to follow the border further till it joined Asher somewhere parallel to Accho, as we do not know the places by which its course is traced. Something, too, has evidently fallen out of the text, as Zebulun is said (xix. 15) to have possessed twelve cities with their dependent villages, while only five are named. Among these is one that bears the time-honoured name of Bethlehem, "House of Bread," as natural an appellation for a place in this fertile district as it was for its celebrated namesake in Judah. The town is now represented by the squalid village of Beit Lahm, situated seven miles west of Nazareth.

Fair and fruitful as was the inheritance of Zebulun, with the rich valleys of the mountains, the plain and fisheries of Gennesareth, and the treasures of the sea at Accho, the tribe seems to have been of small importance, and to have held a very subordinate position in the commonwealth. We hear incidentally of the varied productions of these northern territories, and of the warriors whom they were able to supply, in the account of what befell David at Hebron (1 Chron. xii.). Thus there came to him of Zebulun, "such as were able to go out in the host, that could set the battle in array, with all manner of instruments of war, 50,000, . . . and were not of double heart." And at the same time Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali "brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules,

¹ "Bell. Jud." iii. 6 f.

and on oxen, victual of meal, cakes of figs, and clusters of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep in abundance." Yet with all this material prosperity the tribe never asserted itself; it has left no mark in the page of history. The very abundance of its resources induced sloth in the course of time; and like the other northern tribes it maintained its peculiar nationality very partially, and assimilated its manners and partly its religion to the Gentile neighbours whom it failed to expel. In the earlier days of the settlement the Zebulonites took a prominent part in the struggle against Jabin, so that Deborah could say of them and Naphtali that they "jeoparded their lives unto the death upon the high places of the field." And if the translation in Judges v. 14 be correct:

"Out of Zebulun they that handle the staff of the scribe,"

we must suppose that commercial enterprise and intercourse with other nations had led them to study arts and sciences, and to the acquirement of some literary skill. But no proof of such acquirements has reached us, and the glory of Zebulun consists not in any action or monument or written production, but in the fact that this territory contains many of the places endeared to us by their connection with the life and words of our Blessed Saviour.

Immediately south of Zebulun, between that tribe and Manasseh, came the inheritance of Issachar, which was the next lot. Josephus^{*} says that it extended in length from Carmel to the Jordan, and in breadth to Mount Tabor. Thus it included the greater part of the plain of Jezreel ("God soweth") or Esdraelon, which contains the richest soil in all the country. This celebrated plain is triangular in shape, running from the Jordan valley in a north-westerly direction to the Bay of Acre. The base abuts on the Arabah, and is about fifteen miles in length, measured from Jenin (Engannim) on the south to Tabor on the north; the northern side is formed by the mountains of Nazareth, which rise precipitously from the level; the southern is formed by the hills of Samaria and the long stretch of Carmel; the apex is a narrow pass through which the Kishon makes its way to the Bay of Acre. From the base of the triangle three branches descend eastward to the Jordan

* "Ant." v. 1. 22.

valley, separated by nearly isolated ranges rising out of the plain, the southern being Mount Gilboa, the centre the Little Hermon, called Moreh in Judges vii. 1, and now Jebel Duhy, and the northern the rounded mamelon of Tabor. The middle branch of these three, which falls rapidly to the Jordan, is known by the name of the Vale of Jezreel, and has the towns Jezreel and Shunem on either side at the western extremity, and Bethshan at the eastern. "Esdraelon," says Dr. Thomson,¹ "is by no means the level plain it appears to be, as seen from Tabor or the top of Jebel ed Duhy. The western part has a decided dip towards the Mediterranean, while portions of it at different places roll up in long, undulating swells, like great waves of the sea. The soil is surpassingly fertile. Checkered patches of wheat, barley, maize or Indian corn, millet, sesame, and even cotton, with broad, dark-brown strips of fallow land intervening, cover the surface; and along the hill-sides here and there are groves of fig and olive-trees descending into the plain. The few palms at Jenin, the fruit-trees, and the prickly-pear hedges surrounding most of the villages on the heights, add variety to the scene." The plain may be reckoned as some twenty miles in length, and fourteen in its broadest part. Such a level expanse, free from forest and rock, is rare in Palestine, and hence has always formed the great battle-field of the country, and the pages of history are filled with reminiscences of great events which have occurred in this locality. Many towns named in Bible story are found in the inheritance of Issachar. Sixteen cities are enumerated as appertaining thereto, but many of these are utterly unknown. Some, however, are happily identified, and we can still trace the spots where important battles were fought, or once famous cities stood. Jezreel, for instance, from which the valley took its name, is well authenticated, being now called Zerin, which is simply a corruption of the ancient name.² It stands, as we have said above, at the western opening of the central offshoot of the great plain. The knoll on which it is placed rises to the height of a hundred feet, very gradually on the south, but steeply and ruggedly on the north and east. The view from this eminence is extensive, ranging from the Jordan valley on the one side unto Carmel on the other, and comprehending the

¹ "Central Palestine," 209.

² See Robinson, "Bib. Res." iii. 163 ff.

whole extent of the plain. Three miles north-east of Jezreel stands Shunem, now Solam, also upon an eminence of some two hundred feet in height, surrounded with an unequalled wealth of corn-fields, and celebrated as the central position of the Philistines before the fatal battle of Gilboa, and as the scene of the story of the Shunammite woman, and her son whom Elisha restored to life. Still further south, and indeed at the bottom of the plain, is situated Jenin, the ancient Engannim, "Fountain of Gardens," which still justifies its name by the fertility of its inclosures watered by a beautiful stream which runs through the town, and by the abundance of the fruit-trees which enrich the neighbourhood. This is "the garden house" to which Jehu pursued the flying Ahaziah.² "East of the town rises the stony range of Gilboa, encircling a considerable plain; to the north stretches out, as far as the eye can reach, the brown rolling plain of Esdraelon, brightened with spots of green; and three miles beyond it are the hills from which the white houses of Nazareth look down. Nearer at hand is the cone of the extinct volcano of Jebel Duhy, while to the west the view is closed by the broad shoulder of Carmel." The other towns noted as existing in Joshua's time have not been identified with any certainty. One of them, Beth-shemesh ("House of the Sun"), has the same name as the more famous city in Judah and another in Naphtali, and witnesses to the wide prevalence of sun-worship among the previous inhabitants of the land. Many cities within the limits of Issachar, such as Bethshan, Megiddo, Taanach, Endor, came into the possession of Manasseh, and have been already mentioned. The old patriarchal blessing rightly intimated the position and habits of Issachar.

" Issachar is a strong male ass
 Couching down between the sheepfolds ;
 And he saw a resting-place that it was good,
 And the land that it was pleasant ;
 And he bowed his shoulder to bear,
 And became a servant under taskwork."

It was an indolent agricultural people, with no high aspirations, content to endure oppression, and pay black-mail to the various marauding tribes which were attracted by the

² 2 Kings ix. 27; Geikie, "The Holy Land and Bible," ii. 246.

richness of the land. The sentence of Moses would imply that Issachar lived a semi-nomadic life ; for he bids him “rejoice in his tents.” Yet the tribe was powerful. The adult males at Sinai amounted to 54,400 ; on the plains of Shittim they had increased to 64,300, being exceeded only by Judah and Dan. Their numerical superiority, however, did not lead to any corresponding eminence in war or politics. Though the great struggle with Sisera (Judg. v.) took place in their territory, “by Taanach at the waters of Megiddo,” we should not gather from Deborah’s song that they played any prominent part in the action. Probably the appropriation by Manasseh of certain towns assigned to Issachar indicates that the latter left to their brother tribe the task of wresting them from the Canaanites. They showed political sagacity in assisting to make David king over all Israel, and it was this wisdom which led the Chronicler to speak of them as “men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.”¹ Further evidence of this prudence is wanting ; and the tribe, though prosperous in numbers, continued in inglorious obscurity till carried away captive with the rest of the people.

The tribe of Asher, whose lot was next assigned, obtained a rich strip of maritime and mountain territory to the west and north of Zebulun. In the march its post had been between Dan and Naphtali on the north of the ark, and it was now associated with the latter in its possession, part of which lay between Naphtali and the sea. As originally assigned the inheritance of Asher reached from Zidon on the north to Shihor-libnath, the Black-white, or Muddy-white river, a name derived from the appearance caused by the chalk brought down from the neighbouring limestone hills. The river thus designated is the Nahr Zerka, or Crocodile Brook, which rises in the Carmel range, drains the marshy ground at the foot of the hills, and, fed by the copious fountains called Mamas, after a tortuous course, falls into the sea between Cæsarea and Dor. Recent travellers have not found that it justifies its name of Crocodile River, as that animal certainly does not now infest the district ; but one was killed there a few years ago, and Mr. Macgregor in his famous canoe voyage met with one in the Kishon only a few miles from this locality.² The territory extended along

¹ 1 Chron. xii. 32.

² “Rob Roy on the Jordan,” 387 ; Geikie, i. 66 f.

the coast from this point northwards to Zidon ; not that Asher ever obtained possession of this Phœnician region, or even of much of the southern portion which contained cities appertaining to other tribes, but such was the inheritance allotted, which it might have colonized had it pursued its claims with energy and perseverance. How far inland the territory extended it is impossible to settle, as the identity of most of the towns named has not been accurately determined. Tyre and Acre, which lay within the boundaries, were never conquered, probably not even assaulted. From a point near Acre as a centre, the boundary line is described by an enumeration of cities, nominally twenty-two in number, north and south. First it touched Helkuth, the modern Yerka, a Druse village, eight miles north-east of Acre, on the slope of the mountain above a wady of the same name ; then it included Achsaph, whose king had been one of the first to join in Jabin's confederacy, and had doubtless suffered the fate of his contemporaries ; keeping to the south it embraced Misheal (Misalli) at the northern extremity of the Plain of Sharon, and continued past Carmel to the Crocodile River. This eastern border was continuous with that of Zebulun up to the ravine of Jiphthahel at its northern extremity, though the places that mark it are not yet identified. One of these, Beth-dagon, synonymous with a town in the Shephelah, points to the wide prevalence of the worship of the fish-god. Another monument of heathen idolatry is found in one of Asher's towns, Hammon, now Umm el Amud, seven miles north of Achzib, which is the modern es Zib, the classical Eidippa, on the sea-coast some six miles above Acre. Hammon is probably the most southern of purely Phœnician towns, and in it has been found "a Phœnician votive tablet to Moloch Astarte, and a long text in eight lines invoking a blessing from Baal, Lord of heaven. In Greek times this site was known as Laodicea, and the old temple seems to have been consecrated to Hammon. Possibly this may be the town of Asher, called Hammon in Joshua xix. 28. The ruins here visible stand on a hill above the shore, and are half hidden by the copse. . . . The most interesting remains on the site are those of two altars, which almost exactly resemble the so-called 'libation tables' of the Egyptians preserved in the Bulak Museum. One of these had an eagle carved on the side, the other was plain. The first was a block

of limestone three and a half feet high, and five feet by three feet at the top ; it had two flat basins, a foot square and a few inches deep, sunk in the upper surface. The second was three feet high and two feet eight inches square, with a single basin of the same size as in the former. No doubt on these ancient altars, now tumbled over on the hill-side, libations to Ashtoreth were often poured before Alexander came to break the power of Tyre.”¹ In Cabul we probably have the modern Kabul, a village eight miles north-east of Acre, in the neighbourhood of which was the district containing the twenty cities presented by Solomon to Hiram, king of Tyre.² The boundary going northward passed Kanah, Ain-Kana, eight miles south-east of Zidon, and reached the most northern place mentioned, Aphek, which has been already described as situated on the Adonis. It is noteworthy, and indicative of the antiquity of the Book of Joshua, that while Zidon is termed “great Zidon,” and is evidently the most important city of the region, Tyre is of less consideration, and, being called “the fortified city,” which is equivalent to “the land fortress,” had evidently at this time not extended to the islands afterwards so celebrated. These islands, two in number, and connected by a mound, were by Alexander the Great united to the mainland. That conqueror, being unable otherwise to overthrow the island fortress, raised a huge mole or causeway in the strait, which by the accumulation of sand is now a broad isthmus half a mile across. To our modern ideas, and in view of our ocean-going ships, Tyre and its harbours are of very moderate dimensions. The area of the islands is only 200 acres, and that of the largest of the two harbours about twelve, while the whole length of the site from north to south does not amount to 1,200 yards, and from east to west is barely 800. “The docks of London cover twice as much space as the whole of the ancient Phoenician capital. . . . Tarshish ships may have been in some cases large and splendid, but these must have been comparatively few in number, for there was no room at Tyre or Sidon even for the shipping of towns like Dundee or Aberdeen, while a single dock on the Thames would hold a greater number of vessels, of immensely greater tonnage, than could have found moorage in Tyre and Sidon together.”³ But though of considerably less importance

¹ Conder, “Heth and Moab,” 87 f.

² 1 Kings ix. 11 ff.

³ Geikie, ii. 495 ff.

than it subsequently became, Tyre was unmolested by the Asherites, who were disposed rather to cultivate friendly relations with the Phœnician inhabitants than to attempt to dispossess them by forcible operations. They may possibly have at first made some hostile demonstrations against their heathen neighbours, but they were so thoroughly checked by the superior power and skill of their opponents that they soon settled down side by side with them, and prosecuted no further attempt at conquest. To their supineness Deborah contemptuously refers when she says (Judg. v. 17) :

"Asher sat still at the haven of the sea,
And abode by his creeks."

The natural advantages of the territory assigned to Asher were great ; the soil was rich and productive, and well fulfilled the promise of his name, which means "favourable," and the patriarchal blessing :

"Out of Asher his bread shall be fat,
And he shall yield royal dainties."

The rich plain of Phœnicia and the fertile upland valleys gave him corn, fruit, milk, and bread to the full, and not only supplied his own necessities, but enabled him to dispense his superfluities to his neighbours by sale or barter.¹ The blessing of Moses was still more emphatic :

"Blessed be Asher above the sons [of Jacob].
Let him be the favoured one of his brethren,
Let him dip his foot in oil.
Thy shoes shall be in iron and brass,
And as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Asher was indeed largely favoured by climate and soil. Olives, which he planted not, were abundant throughout the district, so that he could dip his foot in the oil which overflowed from the presses, the very type of prosperity promised to a faithful people.² Nor were mineral treasures wanting. It was a land whose stones were iron, and out of whose hills copper might be dug, as Moses had promised.³ At any rate, though we have no proof that the Israelites employed any mining operations

¹ Comp. Ezek. xxvii. 17 ; Acts xii. 20 ; Josephus, "Ant." xiv. 10. 6.

² Deut. xxviii. 40 ; Joel ii. 24.

³ Deut. viii. 9.

at this time, it is certain that iron ore was obtained from the slopes of Lebanon at a very early period, and copper in parts of the Phoenician territory. The Asherites were by no means a small tribe. At Sinai they had exceeded in numbers Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, amounting to 41,500, and before entering Canaan had increased to 53,400, which raised them to the fifth place in point of population. But they made small use of their advantages ; they dwelt on sufferance among the Canaanites, preferring ignoble ease and pastoral or commercial employments to the dangers of the soldier's life and the constant activity of a war of conquest.¹ No judge or leader ever rose from their ranks, and through all the ages there is no personage that comes forth from the obscurity in which they are involved save Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, the aged widow who welcomed the advent of the Saviour when He was presented in the temple.²

The sixth lot was that of Naphtali, whose territory lay between Asher and the Upper Jordan, was bounded on the south by Zebulun, and on the north extended far into Coele-Syria, forming the frontier of the country.

Jacob spoke of Naphtali as "a slender terebinth, which spreadeth forth goodly boughs,"³ faithfully adumbrating the tribe with its strip of territory running far north along the Jordan stream, and implying that it would produce brave leaders of the people.⁴ Inclosed as this inheritance was on south and west by other tribes, and bounded on the east by the lakes of Gennesareth and Merom and the Jordan, its limits are easily defined, especially if, as is most probable, the ravine of the Litany, where it turns to the west below Belfort, formed its northern boundary. The area thus inclosed was much larger than that of Issachar, amounting to 800 square miles, which is about the size of Leicestershire. According to Josephus⁵ the north-eastern side extended to Damascus, but there is no evidence of this now extant. Of the towns which are mentioned as defining the boundaries, some are identified with tolerable certainty. The south-eastern point is Adami

¹ Judg. i. 32.

² Luke ii. 36 ff.

³ This rendering, which is obtained by some alteration of the vowel points, seems to be more correct than the A. V. . " Naphtali is a hind let loose ; he giveth goodly words." See Dillmann on Gen. xl ix. 21.

⁴ Ewald, " Hist. Isr." ii. 291.

⁵ " Ant." v. 1. 22.

(Damieh), a little south of the Sea of Galilee ; another point is the oak forest of Zaanannim, above the Lake Merom, a place about to become famous by the murder of Sisera at the hands of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite (Judg. iv.). The name of this place is explained to mean "the unloading of tents," and is referred to the unusual spectacle (still, however, to be seen occasionally) of nomads setting up their tents amid the settled villages of the mountains. There is here a fertile little plain, and the hills are still thickly clothed with oak and other trees, though the thriftless habits of the inhabitants, who are always cutting down and never plant, will ere long make this district as bare as many others are. The furthermost eastern point is called, curiously enough, "Judah at Jordan," of which two explanations are given. Many suppose that the cities called Havoth-Jair in Eastern Manasseh on the opposite side of the Jordan are meant. Jair was a descendant of Judah on the father's side, and was probably assisted by his kinsmen of that tribe in his conquest of Bashan ; hence the towns to which he gave his name, especially those nearest the river, were called "Judah of the Jordan." The other suggestion is that the place referred to is an ancient site, two and a half miles below Banias, which bears the name of Seiyid Huda Ibn Yakub, "Lord Judah, son of Jacob."¹

To guard its inheritance Naphtali possessed a large number of fenced cities, of many of which traces and monuments still remain. Nineteen are named—none too many to protect the northern frontier of the whole country, as the fortresses of Judah secured the southern. Hazor has been already mentioned in Joshua's northern campaign. Ziddim is the Talmudic Caphar Hittai, "the village of the Hittites," now Hattin, on the plain five and a half miles north-west of Tiberias. Tiberias itself was then called Rakhath ("shore"), of which the name exactly suits the site. Speaking of this town and the first view of the Sea of Galilee, Tristram says :² "For nearly three hours we had ridden on, with Hermon in front, sparkling through its light cloud mantle, but still no sight of the Sea of Galilee. One ridge after another had been surmounted, when on a sudden the calm, blue basin, slumbering in placid sweet-

¹ Thomson, "The Land and the Book." Another suggestion is that the right reading is *Hurah*, i.e., the Ghor or Valley of Jordan.

² "Land of Israel," 422 f.

ness beneath its surrounding wall of hills, burst upon us, and we were looking down on the hallowed scenes of our Lord's ministry. We were on the brow of a very steep hill. Below us was a narrow plain, sloping to the sea, whose beach we could trace to its northern extremity. At our feet lay the city of Tiberias, the only remaining town on its shores, enclosed by crumbling fortifications with shattered but once massive round bastions." Hammath ("warm") is recognized in the well-known Hammaus or Emmaus, a place celebrated for its hot springs, within a mile of Tiberias. The water, which is very salt and bitter, issues in four springs at a high temperature, and is still largely used by the natives, who bathe in it for the relief of all kinds of ailments. Here we have, as one of Naphtali's strongholds, Chinnereth, which gave its name to the lake, the original form passing through Genezar to end finally in Gennesaret. The site of this city is wholly unknown. We are more certain when we speak of Kedesh, Kedesh-Naphtali, "The Holy Place of Naphtali," the home of Barak, whence he marched to victory over the hosts of Canaanites. Known sometimes as Kishon or Kishion, and in later days as Cydoessa or Cydissus, it is now called Kedes, the ruins of the place lying on a hill overlooking a rich alluvial plain four miles north-west of Merom.¹ The remains of the old Canaanite fortress have long crumbled into dust ; Thothmes III. of Egypt had reckoned it among his conquests two hundred years before Joshua overcame its king ; but of those early events no trace is found, and the traveller nowadays gazes with wonder on monuments of Roman splendour, temples, tombs, carved stones, which proclaim the power and wealth of the imperial people, and the once dense population of this desolate region.² Another of Naphtali's fenced cities is Migdal-el, which is identified with the modern village el-Mejdel, the ancient Magdala, whence the Mary of the Gospel obtained her appellation. It stands close to the Lake of Gennesaret, at the south-east corner of the plain, an indescribably miserable and filthy place, which could never have possessed any attractions, save as a convenient fishing station.

Moses had blessed Naphtali in these terms :

" O Naphtali, satisfied with favour,
And full with the blessing of the Lord ;
Possess thou the sea and the south."

¹ Josh. xxi. 28 ; Josephus, " Bell. Jud." iv. 2. 3.

² Geikie, ii. 373 f. ; Robinson, " Lat. Res." 366 f.

The district enjoyed great capabilities, grand scenery, fertile land, rich forests. The mountainous portion, Mount Naphtali, as the historian calls it, has retained so glowing a reputation, that it is named at this day Belad-Besharah, "land of good tidings," and it would deserve its title if it were in different hands and under a different government. The plains are commended by Josephus¹ in glowing terms; want and scarcity, he says, are never known there; the soil is productive, fit for pasturage, and adapted for the growth of all kinds of trees; so fertile, indeed, as to invite cultivation at the hands of the most supine. The southern portion of the territory has been called the garden of Palestine; and the fields by the shore of the lake, and the little vales which run thence into the mountains, are of unrivalled fecundity.² Naphtali by its position was somewhat isolated from the southern provinces; but when an enemy invaded Palestine on the side of Cœle Syria, it had to bear the first brunt of the attack. Yet we read of no patriotic struggles, no heroic enterprises, in connection with the tribe, save the solitary occasion when they rallied round Barak, and with Zebulun "jeoparded their lives unto the death upon the high places of the field." This one supreme effort seems to have exhausted their nationalism; henceforward they were mingled among the heathen and learned their works; and in course of time their country became Galilee of the Gentiles. This "name Galilee, pronounced locally Jalil, has been understood to come from a Hebrew word meaning 'circuit,' or circle, but the better derivation appears to be from the root meaning 'to roll.' The area was not a contracted one, but must have been extensive. . . . Thus ancient Galilee must have had one of its flanks resting on the land of the Phœnicians, and the other on the land of the Syrians of Damascus. It comprised Zebulun's inheritance, and part of Naphtali's, all in the hills. It also embraced the inheritance of Issachar on the Esdraelon Plain. The Jewish inhabitants, exposed to Gentile inroads, were wilder and rougher than their brethren in the south."³

The seventh and last lot fell to the tribe of Dan. In the march through the wilderness Dan had held a position on

¹ "Bell. Jud." iii. 3. 2, and 10. 8.

² Porter, *ap.* Kitto, "Cyclop." Art. "Naphtali."

³ Temple, "Palestine Illustrated," 231.

the north in company of Asher and his own brother Naphtali, and in population had been second only to Judah, numbering 62,700 adult males. In the second census it had increased to 64,400, and yet the territory assigned to it was the smallest of all. By its topographical enumeration among the northern tribes it would seem that an intimation was given of the future position which it conquered for itself. Its original settlement, however, was in quite a different direction, to the west of Ephraim and Benjamin up to the sea coast. Girt by those two tribes on the north and east, and by Judah on the south, the boundaries of Dan are not given; only its cities are enumerated. But we can say generally that the inheritance extended from the slopes by which the highlands of Benjamin and Judah descend to the Shephelah, unto the Mediterranean, embracing the coast from Joppa on the north to Jabneel and Ekron on the south, a distance of fourteen miles. Thus it included the lower part of the valley of Sorek (Wady Surar) and the plain of Sharon. Its area was about four hundred square miles, somewhat less than that of Benjamin; and it comprised the richest corn-lands and vineyards of the south. The nineteen cities in the district have for the most part been identified by the Palestine explorers; but many of them are of no importance, and play no part in history. Some, however, are worthy of mention; and of these not a few have been already noticed in connection with other tribes, especially Judah, who seems either to have made over some of his towns to Dan, or to have inhabited them conjointly. Thus Zorah and Eshtaol are on the confines of Judah, and reckoned to that tribe; this is the case also with Irshemesh, or Bethshemesh, now Ain Shems, "the fountain of the sun." Ajalon, so celebrated in the song that told of Joshua's great feat, was now one of Dan's cities, and is represented by the modern village of Yalo, which stands on the side of the hill which forms the southern boundary of the broad and beautiful Merj Ibn Omeir, the ancient valley of Ajalon. The name signifies "place of gazelles," and, with many other like appellations, gives a glimpse of the natural history of the country. Thus we have in its immediate neighbourhood Shaalabbim, "jackals," and Zeboim, "hyænas." The adventures of Samson indicate the abundance of the former of these animals.¹ Of Ekron and Joppa we need not

¹ Judg. xv. 4.

speak. Gibbethon is probably the village of Kibbiah, six miles and a half north-east of Lydda, then called Lod, but not mentioned among Dan's towns ; Jehud is el-Yehudijeh, a little to the east ; and Mejarkon, the most northern locality named, is a town on the river Aujeh, which has the same meaning, "the yellow river." This is the largest stream in the plain of Sharon, and is of sufficient volume to withstand the drought of summer, and to force its way through the opposing sandbanks in a permanent channel to the sea five miles north of Joppa.

The territory of Dan, as we have seen, was very small ; but though the energies of the Danites were thus concentrated in a narrow sphere, they were unable to dispossess the ancient inhabitants. The tract along the coast was held by a horde of Amorites which maintained its position in spite of all efforts to dislodge it.¹ The Philistines also were unsubdued. That Dan did not yield without a struggle, but long maintained the contest with the courage and skill for which it was famed, may be inferred from the term *Mahaneh-Dan*, "camp of Dan," applied to a place near Kirjath-jearim, showing that the tribe was still on the war-path, even when nominally settled in their inheritance.² Forced by their heathen opponents from the rich plain to the more barren hills, and confined in limits too narrow for their population, the Danites determined to enlarge their borders in some other direction. Accordingly, some few years after the allotment, they sent forth five spies from two of their towns with instructions to seek for some favourable spot, as yet unoccupied by their countrymen, which they might seize and colonize.³ These messengers went on their way northwards, through Ephraim and the other tribes, till they had tracked the Jordan to its source ; and here they found what they sought. At the edge of the wide plain which slopes from the south-west angle of the base of Mount Hermon rises "an artificial-looking mound of limestone rock, flat-topped, eighty feet high, and half a mile in diameter."⁴ On this stood a town, named Leshem or Laish, inhabited by a colony from Sidon, separated by the Lebanon and its offshoots from the mother city, dwelling "quiet and secure," inoffensive in their own habits, and without fear of injury from

¹ Judg. i. 34 f.; 1 Sam. vii. 14.

² Judg. xiii. 25; xviii. 12; Ewald, ii. 289.

³ Josh. xix. 47; Judg. xviii.

⁴ Tristram, "Land of Israel," 580.

any powerful neighbour. It was a lavishly fertile and lovely spot ; from the base of the hill one of the sources of the Jordan wells forth, and by its perennial waters maintains the bright verdure of the scene. Well might the spies report : "We have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good, . . . and the land is large, . . . a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth." Travelling towards Banias, Mr. Oliphant¹ speaks thus of the locality : "At this point a new and most enchanting view burst upon us. At our feet lay the plain of the Huleh [Merom], looking far more fertile and productive than it really is ; as much of it is marsh and waste land, that might, however, easily be reclaimed. But surrounded as it is with a girdle of noble mountains, with the blue and tranquil waters of Merom gleaming in the midst of a setting of richest green, and the Jordan winding away in the distance, as seen from the hills to the north, it is without doubt one of the most attractive views in Palestine. One can hardly wonder at the men of Dan, when they came upon it, being fascinated by the luxuriance of the landscape and its charm of position, and then and there deciding to oust the existing peasantry, and occupy as much of it themselves as had not been already appropriated by the tribe of Naphtali."

The report brought by the messengers was considered so satisfactory that an expedition was immediately organized, and six hundred chosen warriors, marching to the north, surprised the unguarded Laish, massacred the inhabitants, burned the city in a reckless spirit of destruction, and established themselves on the ruined site, calling the name of their new settlement Dan, which henceforward became the most northern landmark of Canaan, as Beersheba was considered the southernmost. Of their occupation a memorial exists to this day in the name of the place, which is called Tell-el-Kadi, "the mound of the judge," Kadi, like Dan, signifying "judge." According to one view of the blessing of Moses, Dan was destined to guard the northern frontier, and by this expedition executed a foreseen movement. His words are :

"Dan is a lion's whelp,
That leapeth forth from Bashan."

This sentence may imply that the tribe was to watch the north,

¹ "Land of Gilead," 18 f.

and specially the slopes of Hermon ; or it may be a mere general statement that it should lurk couching for prey, like a lion in the coverts of Bashan. The sentence of Jacob is more definite. First, with a paronomasia on the name, he foretells that the tribe shall make as good a leader of forces and as valiant an opponent of enemies as any of the families in the land.

“ Dan shall judge his people,
As one of the tribes of Israel.”

And certainly Samson, the champion and judge, emphatically confirmed this announcement. He proceeds :

“ Dan shall be a serpent in the way,
An adder in the path,
That biteth the horse's heels,
So that his rider falleth backward.”

His position was to be at the outskirts of Israel, where he was to watch stealthily for the enemy, and fall on him suddenly, as the chosen band surprised Laish. The serpent here referred to is the cerastes, or horned snake (so called, from the appearance of two protuberances over the eyes), a creature some fourteen inches long, which lurks in the sand and darts out suddenly at any passing beast, inflicting a bite which is most poisonous and deadly. It is found in the desert south of Judæa and in Egypt. Horses have a remarkable dread of this reptile, and where they detect its presence cannot be induced to proceed. It would seem from this comparison that Dan was to effect its purposes rather by stratagem than by open assault. The concluding sentence of the blessing may be a tribal war cry in which this vigilant, expectant attitude is intimated :

“ I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord.”

The subsequent history of the tribe is obscure. Samson is the only hero that arose from its lineage. The emigrants, on their way to the north, had carried off from Mount Ephraim the images and the priest found in the house of one Micah, and set up an anomalous worship in their new home.¹ The line of

¹ Judg. xviii. The name “ Manasseh,” in verse 30, is without doubt an unauthorized alteration from “ Moses,” which is the genuine reading. The change was introduced to avoid the scandal of the foundation of an idolatrous worship being traced to the grandson of the great lawgiver.

priests there established was of the tribe of Levi, and indeed of the family of Moses, but it was not Aaronic, and was therefore schismatical. The distance from Shiloh, and their isolated position, led the Danites into schism and idolatry ; the southern section was soon amalgamated with Judah and Benjamin, the northern intermingled with their Phœnician neighbours ; and the individuality of the tribe was so lost, or their gross idolatry was so flagrant, that their genealogies are omitted by the Chronicler, and they do not appear in the Apocalypse among the “ sealed ” Israelites.¹

When all the tribes had received their inheritance, the modest wants of Joshua were provided for. His own interest was the very last thing that he thought of, showing himself now as ever moderate and unselfish. It seems (though the injunction is not found in the Pentateuch) that, like Caleb, Joshua had been distinctly promised a special portion in the land ;² and accordingly he asked for a city in his own tribe, Timnath-Serah, or, as it is called in Judges ii. 9, Timnath-heres, “ Portion of the sun,” the latter part of the word being either a mere transposition of the original Serah, or, according to Jewish tradition, a reference to the miracle at Beth-horon.³ Of its probable position we have already spoken when describing the cities of Ephraim. Its wild and secluded character may have had peculiar attraction for the old warrior, who needed a calm resting-place for his declining years.

¹ Rev. vii.

² Josh. xix. 50 : “ According to the word of the Lord they gave him the city which he asked.”

³ Like Kir-heres, Beth-shemesh, and similar names, the appellation may imply the worship of the sun in these localities.

CHAPTER XI.

RELIGIOUS ARRANGEMENTS.

The custom of blood-revenge—Homicide and murder—Cities of refuge—Right of asylum; how guarded—The death of the high priest—Inheritance of Levi—Cities with pasturage assigned—The three families of Levites—Towns allotted to each—Anathoth—Distribution of Levites—Trans-Jordanic tribes dismissed—They erect an altar; its situation—Action of Western Israelites under a misapprehension—The matter explained and settled satisfactorily.

THERE was still some work to be done before the representatives of the tribes could be dismissed from Shiloh. Joshua, always scrupulously obedient to the injunctions of Moses, now proceeded to carry out the law respecting the cities of refuge which had been already given during the last days of his predecessor.* This law was directed to the restriction of the rude idea of justice which prevailed at that time, and still prevails, in Eastern countries and in other places. In accordance with this idea, it was the duty of kinsmen to avenge the death of a relation by the slaughter of the offender and his children. Thus one murder rendered another necessary, and the feud of blood might be perpetuated for many generations. This iniquitous custom made no distinction between murder and manslaughter and accidental homicide; it comprised innocent and guilty in one common lot, and gave them over to death without trial or hope of reprieve. Jewish legislation endeavoured, without altogether abolishing the system, to mitigate its harshness and to remedy its defects. For the wilful murderer there

* Numb. xxxv. Comp. Exod. xxi. 13; Deut. xix. 2 ff.

was no compassion. He was accursed ; his action was a direct outrage against God, and defiled the land till it was purged by his destruction. No money payment could atone for such crime ; the altar itself was no asylum in such a case. But unintentional and accidental homicide was differently treated. The cities of refuge were provided for such cases. From the number of the towns to be immediately assigned to the Levites, and therefore inhabited by the most intelligent and religious part of the community, three on each side of Jordan were selected in convenient situations. On the west were Kedesh-Naphtali in the extreme north, Shechem in the centre, and Hebron on the south ; on the east, Golan on the north, Ramoth in Gilead in the middle, and Bezer or Bosor, in Reuben, now Kasur el Besheir, two miles south of Dibon. These places were already hallowed by ancient usage, and very probably possessed certain rights of asylum. The very name of some (*e.g.*, Kadesh, "holy") implies sanctity, and others, as Hebron and Shechem, were consecrated by the abode of patriarchs. The roads to these sanctuaries were to be kept open and in good repair, that no unnecessary hindrance might delay the flight of the offender. The enactments respecting asylum were minute and peculiar. None of the common mediæval abuses were possible in the Jewish system. They were, as we have seen, not criminals of every kind who could here find protection ; the right of asylum was restricted to one class of transgressors ; and that was surrounded by safeguards and limitations which rendered deceit and evasion impracticable. Supposing the manslayer escaped immediate death at the hands of the *Goel*, the avenger of blood, and made his way safely to one of the sanctified cities, he was secure for the moment from summary vengeance. Standing in the place of public assembly at the gate, the refugee declared his cause before the elders, showing where the homicide was committed, and that he was guiltless of malice and premeditation. If the explanation was considered satisfactory, he was received provisionally, till the avenger tracked him to his refuge and demanded his surrender. Upon this a more formal investigation was held, and he was put upon his trial before the congregation in the local court. Cleared of the charge of murder by this assembly, the fugitive had a residence assigned to him in the city whither he had fled, in which he was bound to reside

till the death of the ruling high priest. It was specially enacted that he must remain scrupulously within these precincts ; if found outside, his protection was voided ; he might be put to death with impunity. Thus even the involuntary homicide was punished by a kind of exile from his home, and deprivation of the emoluments arising from his usual pursuits. The sanctity of human life was thus confirmed, and bloodshed, though unpremeditated, was shown to be a grave and serious matter, which justly brought upon the offender many inconveniences. At the death of the high priest a general amnesty ensued, and the manslayer was at liberty to return to his home and resume his occupations in perfect security. Various reasons have been assigned for this particular regulation. Some see in it only a mode of interposing a salutary delay, and giving time for justice to be heard and passions to cool. But the high priest's death might occur directly after the transaction, and the homicide would in that case be released immediately. Nor was it simply that the decease of the spiritual ruler was an event of such vast national importance, that all other deaths were forgotten and condoned in the universal sorrow. Nor, again, was this banishment merely a punishment for the carelessness and inadvertence which had occasioned the fatal act. The import of the law was something much deeper. The manslayer, who had even involuntarily incurred the guilt of bloodshed, must remain under the protection of the priests and Levites who were appointed to bear the iniquity of the children of Israel. The high priest was the head of the theocracy and the representative of the whole people ; on him, year by year, were laid the transgressions of all ; and while he lived, he was, as it were, legally infected with this load of sin. At his death this load passed from him, and he being thus justified, the sinners whom he represented were justified also, and the manslayer was released.¹ We Christians see here an adumbration of the sacrifice of Christ, our great High Priest, whose death delivers from sin and sets the captive free. This beneficent system of asylum was ordained to hold good not only for actual Israelites, but for dependents, captives, and naturalized foreigners who formed a tenth or more of the population.

The Levites had now to be provided for in pursuance of the commands of God given to Moses.² It had been impossible to do

¹ Bp. Ellicott on Josh. xx. 6.

² Numb. xxxv. 1-8.

this till the other tribes were settled, as the cities assigned to the Levites were to be within the limits of the several territories allotted to their brethren. They were not to have a separate division of the land ; the Lord God of Israel was to be their inheritance. Jacob had said sadly of them and the Simeonites :

“ I will divide them in Jacob,
And scatter them in Israel.”

We have seen how this sentence was fulfilled in the miserable decadence of Simeon. In the case of Levi the sentence was modified by subsequent events. The faithfulness of Moses, and the holy zeal of the tribe on the occasion of the terrible apostasy at Horeb,¹ converted it into a blessing. They were indeed “divided,” but this distribution was made to conduce to great spiritual and social benefits. So when the elders presented themselves before Eleazar, and Joshua, and the other commissioners, and claimed from them the formal assignment of the provision destined for them, the demand was at once complied with. The sacerdotal and military and civil authorities were in full concert on this as on all other occasions, and exactly carried out the precepts enunciated in the Book of the Law. Every tribe was to make an offering out of its abundance by assigning some of its cities to the Levites ; towns to the number of forty-eight were thus appropriated, being at the rate of four from each tribe, though this was practically modified in some cases by local circumstances. These cities were not made over absolutely and entirely. They remained in the tenure of their original possessors, while the Levites had the right to domiciles in them, and to a certain extent of pasture-land in the suburbs. The extent of this allotment of meadow was accurately defined, so as to preclude all chicanery or niggardliness. It was to reach to a thousand cubits from the walls, north, south, east, and west, and to present a front of not less than two thousand cubits, thus securing about three hundred acres in area, which, as the Levites did not cultivate the land, would be sufficient for the pasturage of their flocks. The four “suburbs” thus delineated were not necessarily continuous ; as long as they conformed to the enjoined requirements, they might be modified by the situation

¹ Exod. xxxii. 25 ff.

of the city and the natural features of the locality.¹ For their further support (as their duties forbade them to engage in temporal pursuits) the Levites received tithes from all the people, at the same time themselves offering a tithe of their revenues to the priests as a recognition of their higher consecration. The catalogue of the Levitical cities is given in Josh. xxi., and, with some variations and omissions, in 1 Chron. vi. 54-81. These deviations may be accounted for by the compilers having relied upon different documentary sources, or by lapse of time, or exchanges or additions. Certainly the list in our Book is not a final one. For instance, Nob, which we know was a priestly city in Saul's time, is not mentioned at all. In the distribution recourse was again had to the lot, that all might be in the hands of Providence, and all jealousy and dispute be obviated. The cities which each tribe was to give having been determined by local considerations, the lot decided to which of the families each should be assigned. The tribe was divided into three families, the Gershonites, the Kohathites, and the Merarites, of which the Kohathites held the first rank, as being the branch to which belonged Aaron and the priesthood. Among these families the forty-eight cities were distributed in the following proportions, viz., thirteen to the Aaronites or priests, ten to the rest of the Kohathites, thirteen to the Gershonites, and twelve to the Merarites. The sons of Aaron were first provided for, and it was considered providential that the homes assigned to them fell within the borders of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, the future centre of the national religion, the spot where God would place His name. It was, too, in view of future requirements, rather than from present demands, that so large a number of towns were given to the priests, though doubtless by this time the family had multiplied considerably and numbered some thousands. The cities also were of small size, and some of them probably still in the possession of the original inhabitants, and are enumerated here before they were actually occupied by the sacerdotal immigrants. Among them are Hebron, Libnah, Eshtemoa, Gibeon, Bethshemesh. We need not delay long over these Levitical towns. Most of them

¹ The above seems the simplest solution of the difficult question of these suburbs and pasturages. The subject is treated at some length by Dr. Ginsburg in Kitto's "Cyclop." s.v. *Levites*; but I cannot agree to his opinion.

have already come to our notice in the previous history ; but some few hitherto unmentioned may be named. Of the nine appropriated from the territory of Judah and Simeon, all have been noticed before ; of the four received in the country of Benjamin, one became celebrated only at a later period. This was Anathoth, whither the priest Abiathar was banished by Solomon in punishment of his treasonable conspiracy in favour of Adonijah ; here was born the great prophet Jeremiah. The town, now called Anata, stands on a broad ridge about three miles north-east of Jerusalem on the road that crosses the northmost summit of the range of Olivet. It was a place of some strength, surrounded with walls, and with fertile "suburbs" which still show signs of cultivation. Another place not hitherto enumerated among the possessions of Benjamin is Almon, or, as it is called in 1 Chron. vi. 60, Alemeth. It has been identified with the ruins of Almit, about a mile north-east of Anata. The rest of the Kohathites, that is, those who were not of the sacerdotal order, had been greatly diminished by the destruction incurred in the punishment of Korah's rebellion,¹ and their wants were supplied by the appropriation of ten cities. These were taken from the neighbouring territories, four in Ephraim, four in Dan, and two in Western Manasseh. Among these are the well-known Shechem, Gezer, and Beth-horon ; one called Kibzaim is probably Jokmeam under another name. Others are Gibbethon, Aijalon, Tanach, and Ibleam. The next lot fell to the Gershonites, who received thirteen cities, viz., two in Eastern Manasseh, Golan in Bashan, and Og's city Ashtaroth-Karnaim, four miles north of Edrei ; four in Issachar of no importance ; four in Asher, among which are Abdon on the north of the plain of Acre, and Rehob not yet identified ; and three in Naphtali, of which only Kedesh in Galilee is known to fame. To the Merarites were assigned twelve cities, viz., four in Zebulun, such as Jokneam at the eastern end of Carmel, and others whose names greatly vary in manuscripts and versions ; four in Reuben, as Bezer, just below Dibon, and Kedemoth still further south ; and the same number in Gad, of which three are highly celebrated, Ramoth-Gilead, Mahanaim, and Heshbon.

Thus the Levites were dispersed throughout Israel, carrying

¹ 1 Kings ii. 26 ; Jer. i. 1.

² Numb. xvi. ; xxvi. 9 f.

culture and religion into every corner of the land. Free from the petty cares and anxieties of this life, their temporal wants amply provided for, they were able to turn their attention to higher duties and attend to matters of national importance. In theory at least they were to be standing witnesses for God among the people. When not engaged in performing the religious duties which were apportioned among them, they were the teachers of the young, the readers, transcribers, and expounders of the Law, the annalists and chroniclers who preserved the memory of great events and distinguished personages. They brought religion into everyday life, mutually helping each other and their neighbours to realize the unseen, and to attain to the standard of the peculiar people of God. That this ideal was never reached, and that the benefits designed were never fully recognized and enjoyed, is unhappily very true. But this shows merely the imperfection that cleaves to all human performances, and how man's self-will and neglect mar the fairest projects. The wisdom and prudence of the design remain unimpaired by the deficiencies of the agents; and we may trace the subsequent rise of the schools of the prophets, which did so much for religion and produced such grand characters, to this distribution of the Levites throughout the length and breadth of Israel.

The distribution of the land being now complete, and the promises made by God to Abraham and Moses being now fulfilled, no further national enterprise was needed; the work that remained to be accomplished must be undertaken by each tribe for itself. It was time now to dismiss the trans-Jordanic tribes, who had loyally kept their word, and served with their brethren during this protracted warfare. Joshua therefore summons these warriors before him at Shiloh, warmly commends their self-sacrificing conduct, warns them that their prosperity depends upon their continued obedience to "the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord charged" them, and with a fervent blessing dismisses them, saying, "Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment, and divide the spoil of your enemies with the brethren whom ye left behind." It argues much for the personal influence of Joshua and the confidence with which he was regarded, that he had

succeeded in retaining these soldiers with him without a murmur for so many years. That they had not long ago insisted on returning to their homes and occupying the cities allotted to them, is a remarkable instance of disinterested and ready obedience of which history affords few parallel examples.

Thus solemnly dismissed, the two tribes and a half set out on their return. While still on the west of Jordan, it occurred to them that it would be expedient to erect some memorial in a conspicuous position, near the margin of the river, which might be a witness of their unity of faith with their western brethren, of their participation in the ordinances of worship, and of their claim to be regarded as one people in spite of their apparent isolation. Accordingly, ere they crossed the Jordan, they built a huge monument, "a great altar to see to," one that was conspicuous from a long distance, to be, as they said, Ed, a witness. That such memorials, erected not for sacrificial purposes, but for other considerations, were not uncommon, we see from previous histories. Thus Moses, after the defeat of the Amalekites, "built an altar and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi," and Jacob, on his return from Padan-aram, set up a pillar at Bethel in remembrance of the vision there vouchsafed to him.¹ The position of this altar erected by the returning warriors has been much disputed. Josephus² states distinctly that it was on the east side of the Jordan, and at one time Captain Conder³ thought that the group of menhirs opposite es Salt in Mount Gilead was connected with the memorial; but there is no doubt that the Jewish historian was mistaken in his assertion. Both the language used and the nature of the transaction fix the site to the western bank. The altar is said (xxii. 11) to be built "in the forefront of the land of Canaan, in the region (circles) round about Jordan, on the side that pertaineth to the children of Israel." If this translation of the Hebrew holds good, as competent scholars admit, we can have no hesitation in placing the altar upon the western side of Jordan. Besides, it was necessary for their assertion of unity with their brethren, and to keep alive their claim to fellowship, that their "witness" should stand in their brethren's territory. It would be no denegation of the isolating barrier interposed by the Jordan to raise such a monument in their own country; the essence of

¹ Exod. xvii. 15; Gen. xxxv. 14.

³ "Heth and Moab," 177.

² "Ant." v. 1. 26.

the transaction was that their hands should set up the memorial in the district with which they desired to hold the most intimate relations. The Palestine "explorers" ¹ consider that they have discovered the site of this altar on the summit of Kurn-Surtabeh, a bold headland that juts out in the Jordan valley, four miles west of the Damieh ford, some twenty miles above Jericho, on the direct route from Shiloh. The ascent to this peak, which like a white bastion dominates the valley at a height of 2,300 feet, is now called *Tal' at abn Ayd*, which curiously revives the Hebrew name Ed. Here are huge remains of antique masonry, and the spot is visible from an immense distance, from Mount Ebal, from the hills round Gennesaret, from the Dead Sea ; and in later times, owing to its conspicuous position, it was used as a beacon station in connection with a similar telegraph on the Mount of Olives. Remarkably enough, there are certain localities in the immediate neighbourhood which recall this use of the height. Thus there is one place named Daluk, "burning," another Wady en Nar, "valley of fire," and yet a third, which intimates the purpose of these signals, Umm Hallel, "mother of new moon." News of the novel proceeding of the dismissed tribes soon reached the Western Israelites, and excited a wild commotion amongst them. They were already dispersing to their several homes, when the intelligence of their brethren's apparently schismatical action recalled them to Shiloh. Without any command of Joshua, simply in their zeal for the Law, whose provisions had been infringed, they gathered themselves together. What said the Law given by Him whose marvellous aid had enabled them to win these late triumphs, and in gratitude to whom they were bound to enforce its enactments ? "Whosoever there be that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the Lord ; even that man shall be cut off from among the people." "Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither shalt thou come. . . . Take heed that thou offer not thy burnt-offering in every place that thou seest." And the doom of any who set up strange worship was solemnly determined : "Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, . . . and it

¹ "Quarterly Paper," Oct., 1874 ; "Memoirs," ii. 308 ff.

shall be a heap for ever ; it shall not be built again." ¹ By erecting an alien altar the trans-Jordanic tribes, even if they did not degenerate into idolatry, were aiming a blow at that national unity the preservation of which was so essential to the well-being of the people. The one centre of worship, and the obligation to resort thither three times a year, kept always before their minds their common origin and common obligations, however far apart their homes were fixed. It was obvious that with a new sanctuary and another religious establishment close at hand, the eastern tribes would ere long cease to attend the regular worship in Canaan, and come to regard themselves as a separate and independent people. In vindication of the outraged Law the Israelites prepared to make war on their misguided brethren, either compelling them to renounce their schismatical action, or ready to punish them with the utmost severity if they obstinately persisted in their error. What part Joshua took in these proceedings does not appear. Possibly it was owing to his advice that nothing was done rashly. Jealous as he was for the honour of God, he would not sanction a civil war without the gravest and most irrefragable reason. Before taking fatal measures a strict examination should be held in accordance with the provisions of the code which the leader always scrupulously observed, and all due opportunity should be afforded to the offenders for explanation. Accordingly, there was dispatched a deputation, consisting of ten chieftains representing the western tribes, headed by the priest Phinehas himself, once more appearing as the zealous defender of the faith, as he had boldly punished the sinners at Shittim, when the destroying angel was making havoc of the congregation.² The envoys found the people already in the land of Gilead and preparing to disperse their several ways. The remonstrance which they made was forcible and dignified. "What trespass," they say by the mouth of their spokesman, "is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that ye have builded you an altar to rebel this day against the Lord?" Then Phinehas reminds them of the terrible retribution which befell the worshippers of Baal-Peor,

¹ Lev. xvii. 8, 9 ; Deut. xii. 5, 13 ; xiii. 12 ff. The incident in the text is one of those many (and they are very numerous) intimations which show that the history presupposes the enactment of the Mosaic law and a general knowledge of its requirements.

² Numb. xxv. 7 ff.

and intimates that there were still among them some who hankered after the licentious orgies of idolatry. He warns them that the sin of individuals is visited on the whole community, as they had lately seen in the case of Achan, and that the prosperity of the nation depended on the general obedience and piety of its members. And he bids them, if they consider that their inheritance is polluted by idol worship, and not hallowed by the presence of the Lord, to quit it altogether, and to find a home with their brethren in Canaan, where the sanctuary was securely established, and where God visited His people. Any sacrifice would be better than to offend their gracious God by an act of flagrant schism, which must meet with condign punishment, and would be fraught with fatal consequences to the whole nation. The inculpated tribes at once proceeded to vindicate their action and calmly to defend themselves from the charge brought against them. Invoking God Himself to witness their innocence and to judge the integrity of their intentions, they assert in the most solemn manner that the altar which they had raised was not designed for any kind of sacrifice whatever ; far be it from them to interfere with the unity of the established worship ; rather, it was for the very purpose of preserving this unity that they had thus acted. The altar was a monument of their connection with their western brethren in faith and polity. Separated as they were geographically from the rest of Canaan, they feared that they might be treated as aliens in time to come, and so they erected this model of the altar of Jehovah as a witness that they had the same right to approach the Lord as the other tribes, but, as they repeat in emphatic asseveration, with no intention of using it for sacrificial purposes. The explanation so frankly and temperately offered was regarded as entirely satisfactory. "This day," said Phinehas, "we know that the Lord is in the midst of us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord ; now have ye delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord, so that they will not be chastised for your delinquency." The deputies returned with joy to Shiloh, reporting to Joshua the favourable result of their interference. All thought of war was laid aside, and the bond between the various members of the community was only strengthened by the temporary misunderstanding so completely and happily settled. In this transaction we see the effects of Joshua's continual influence, and of the efforts which he never

ceased to make towards national unity. A short time sufficed to change all this for the worse ; but during the period with which we are concerned, the people were combined in one desire to maintain unimpaired their dependence upon Jehovah, to observe the laws which had come down to them, and at any cost to punish rebellion against the foundation of their national life.

CHAPTER XII.

LAST DAYS.

The commonwealth of Israel—First address of Joshua—Final charge at Shechem—The people's response—Ratification of the Covenant—Death of Joshua—His tomb—Tomb of Eleazar.

THE transactions narrated above were followed by a period of peace. Joshua retired to his house at Timnath-serah, and for some eighteen years we lose sight of him altogether, though we must believe that many resorted to him for counsel and hung on the old warrior's words as he recounted the stirring incidents of his long career, and told how God fought for Israel. During all this period the people were wholly engaged in settling themselves in their possessions and attending to their private concerns. They were not intended to be a nation of warriors; ever restlessly pressing forward to renewed conquests, and organizing distant expeditions for territorial aggrandisement. They had their own inheritance given them directly by the Lord, who was the absolute owner of the land; and this they had to take and retain with watchful guardianship. Possessing only a life interest in the soil, they could not dispose of their property altogether; if sold, it reverted to its original owner in the year of jubilee. Thus there was no accumulation of territory in the hands of a few; great wealth and great poverty were alike unknown. The national life was based on agriculture; each little community supplied its own necessaries, lived on the produce of its fields, its flocks and herds, paid little attention to manufactures, and felt no need of commercial relations with aliens beyond its own borders. Each tribe was governed by its own elders and chiefs, subject to a committee of the whole gathered at the religious centre under the presidency of the high priest. Such

was the system certainly in the time of Joshua and his immediate successors—a republic under theocratic guidance.

Now Joshua, the most religious of men, the dutiful soldier, the simple servant of Jehovah, was profoundly impressed with the inviolable connection between national prosperity and national piety, and being now far advanced in years, and knowing the temptations which would beset his countrymen when he and his contemporaries were removed by death, having perhaps seen some symptoms of an evil heart of unbelief, though no overt rebellion had yet marred the obedience of the chosen people, he uttered two farewell addresses in order to warn them against declension, and to encourage them to continue in the only safe way. We might put into his mouth the words which St. Peter uses in his Second Epistle : “ I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and are established in the truth which is with you. And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance ; knowing that the putting off my tabernacle cometh swiftly. Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance.” The old chieftain first summons the elders to his home at Timnath-serah,* where for many years he had been leading a quiet and retired life, and addresses them as persons of culture and authority, who understand their duty and are in a position to execute it. Relying largely on his memory of the utterances of his master Moses, using the same arguments, and very often employing the same words, he reminds them of all that God has done for them, attributing their marvellous success to its true source ; of his own great part in these events he modestly says little ; but he tells them that even the places as yet unsubdued were included in their lot and had to be gradually absorbed ; and that in reliance on Jehovah’s promise they should go forth conquering. But the achievement of this result depends on their strict obedience. “ Therefore,” he says in the very terms used to himself (i. 7), “ be ye very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses,

* The place of assembly is not expressly mentioned (ch. xxiii.), but as the last formal meeting was held at Shechem, this, which was of a less solemn character and more restricted in numbers, probably took place in his own house.

that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand, or to the left." They must beware of associating with the heathen peoples in their neighbourhood or participating in their idolatries. God had hitherto helped them because they had been true to Him, and He would do even greater things, if they showed their love to Him by unswerving obedience. Then the venerable leader utters a note of warning. If they turn away from their dependence upon Jehovah, indulge in familiar intercourse with pagans, and intermarry with them, God will aid them no longer in their enterprises ; He will leave these Canaanites to be a snare and a trap, scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes, till they perish from off the good land given for their inheritance. With a touching allusion to his own approaching end Joshua concludes his address by recalling the awful denunciations of Moses, and assuring them that as the Lord had proved Himself faithful in conferring all the blessings which He had promised, so He would be no less true in punishing dereliction of duty by the infliction of the tremendous penalties threatened in the Law.¹

Such was the first address of the old servant of God to the companions of his labours, his comrades in arms, those who had the direction of affairs and would have to carry out the Divine programme when death removed him from the scene. But his care for his beloved countrymen was not even yet satisfied ; he wished to leave them still another legacy, and to take a farewell of them in a more solemn and public manner. There was danger in the very prosperity which they enjoyed ; luxury, indolence, worldliness might naturally be fostered by peace and plenty ; there was the temptation of the seductive rites of the licentious Canaanites which made laxity and vice a religious service ; and there was the human repugnance at law and restrictive duty, which might rise to open rebellion when the hand that had so long pointed the way was chilled in death. So the gray-headed warrior came forth from his retirement, summoned all Israel to meet him by their representatives at Shechem, and here, where Abraham had received the promise of the holy land, where Jacob had sanctified his house to the service of God,² where the bones of Joseph were deposited, where, years before, the blessings and curses of the Law had been

¹ See Lev. xxvi. 14 ff. ; Deut. xxviii.-xxx.

² Gen. xii. 7 ; xxxiii. 18-20 ; xxxv. 2.

solemnly pronounced, he gave his last charge and bound the people to be faithful to the covenant. He spake as one who had the authority of God for what he said, prefacing his address with the words : "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel." He recounts five great events which displayed the gratuitous mercies of God to His chosen people. There was the call of Abraham from the other side of the Euphrates, where his father had served false gods, and whence God took him to the land of Canaan, and gave him posterity which in the course of time sojourned in Egypt ; there was the great deliverance from this land of bondage under the guidance of Moses and Aaron, attended with signs and wonders manifold ; there was the total defeat of the Amorites on the east of Jordan, and the strange frustration of the machinations of Balaam, so that he who came to curse was constrained to bless ; there was the miraculous passage across the Jordan, succeeded by the fall of the strong city Jericho ; and lastly there was the conquest of all the nations of Canaan, achieved not by mere force of mortal arms, but by the Lord's intervention, who arrayed the powers of nature against these iniquitous peoples,¹ and who put them in possession of a cultivated land in which they had not laboured, vineyards and oliveyards which they had not planted, and commodious cities ready built to their hand. Having due regard to all these mercies, so vast, so unmerited, their plain duty was to fear the Lord and to serve Him in sincerity and truth. If, as he feared, there were still among them some who in secret clung to idolatrous practices, he adjured them to put away their strange gods, and from this time to worship only Jehovah who had done such wonders for them. No alternative existed ; either they must turn to the degraded idolatry of the Amorites and of their early ancestors who knew not the true God, or they must reverence the one Lord of heaven and earth. He concludes his appeal by announcing his own inalienable

¹ "I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you," Josh. xxiv. 12. So Exod. xxiii. 28 ; Deut. vii. 20 ; Wisd. xii. 8. Districts have ere now been depopulated by an invasion of hornets and poisonous flies ; and though the history makes no detailed mention of such infliction, it is not impossible that something of the kind may have tended to lay some regions open to the Israelites without contest. Many critics, however, consider that "the hornet" is a metaphor for the agony of panic with which the Canaanites received tidings of the advance of the invading Hebrews.

choice, the choice of one now on the verge of the grave, who had never swerved from his loyal devotion : "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord Jehovah."

Moved by the earnest appeal of their venerated leader, the people with one accord profess their unshaken devotion to Jehovah, whose mercies just recounted they were forward to acknowledge : "We too, as thou thyself dost," they say to him, "will serve the Lord; for He is our God." But Joshua is not satisfied with this impulsive assertion of faith; these loud and confident professors had not counted the cost of the service which they assumed; in the excitement of the moment they had welcomed responsibilities which they might not be prepared to meet. In the first place the Lord is a jealous God, who will not consent to a divided allegiance, to be worshipped as one God among many, but will have the entire devotion of His people and reign absolute and supreme. In the second place, He is a holy God, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and the law which He enjoins is rigorous and severe, and of no easy fulfilment. Let them remember this, and make no hasty vows. Did the good old man, with the prescient sagacity of approaching death, forebode coming failure, a want of consistency in this loudly expressed sincerity? No such forebodings affected the people; with one voice they exclaimed : "Nay, but we will serve the Lord."

Then they made their choice, and by their public protestation bare witness against themselves if they ever broke their engagement. As a practical proof of sincerity, Joshua demanded that they should give up all secret idolatry, and put away the teraphim and images, which, if not actually worshipped, might at any rate lead to superstitious practices and temptation.* And a third time the people utter their solemn promise : "The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey." Whether any general purging of idolatrous customs, exhibited by the burning or burying of unlawful images, followed this repeated asseveration, we know not. Joshua did all that lay in his power to hold the people to their engagement. With solemn ceremonial he renewed and ratified the covenant between God and Israel, which had been first made at Sinai, and again in the plains of Moab, on both which occasions he had been present

* The episode of Micah in Judg. xvii. is a proof of this. See also Gen. xxxi. 19; xxxv. 2; 1 Sam. xix. 13.

and taken part in the august inauguration ; he gave certain definite directions concerning religious observances, and he wrote an account of these transactions on a papyrus roll and placed it as an appendix to the Book of the Law of Moses which he possessed. Still further to preserve the memory of this signal occurrence, he erected a huge stone under the venerable oak which grew in that holy spot, consecrated by so many religious associations, and where not improbably the altar of Abraham and Jacob was yet to be seen. In explaining the significance of this stone Joshua speaks the last words which are recorded of him : "Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us ; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spake unto us ; it shall be therefore a witness against you, lest ye deny your God." With this impressive warning he dismissed the assembly, and returned to his peaceful home, never again to leave it for more stirring scenes. Nothing, indeed, happened to call him from his retirement. There was no enemy to arouse his old martial spirit ; there was no backsliding or rebellion that demanded his interference ; and the influence of his example and instructions extended so deeply and so long, that the historian brings his book to a close with the happy words : " Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and had known all the work of the Lord, that He had wrought for Israel." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, . . . that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

And now the end came for this servant of the Lord ; his mission accomplished, his work of war and peace alike successfully completed, he sank to rest. At the ripe age of one hundred and ten years, not so old as his master Moses, but having reached precisely the age of Joseph, Joshua died. He appointed no successor ; none of his family took his place ; indeed his posterity is never mentioned in history, and it is doubtful if he left any children to carry on his name. But a higher fame is his, a more enduring memorial than any earthly family could convey. On the sublime subject of the typical character of him whose life we have been tracing we shall say a few words before we conclude. Meantime we have to follow him to his tomb. The record runs : "They buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-Serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash." The spot

was well known when the account was written ; its identification in later times has always been a difficulty. We do not know what is meant by the hill Gaash ("shaking"), the name, which suggests "earthquake," being applicable to many places. Jerome seems to have recognized Timnath-Serah in Tibneh, the modern Thimnathah, about five miles north-east of Lydda and about double that distance from Bethel, where are the ruins of a great city situated on two hills. On the slope of one, now called Deir ed Dham, are seen numerous excavations very like what are termed the Tombs of the Kings at Jerusalem, and in these M. Guérin in the year 1863 discovered a large number of flint knives, such as, according to the tradition mentioned in the Septuagint, were buried in Joshua's sepulchre.¹ But the Jewish and Samaritan traditions, confirmed lately by the Palestine Exploration committee, agree in fixing the site of the tomb at Kefr Haris (the latter portion of the name representing *Heres*), a village five miles south-west of Shechem and seven north of Shiloh. The tomb which used to be considered that of Joshua is thus described :² " Nine tombs were here observed, of which five were closed with rubbish. The first tomb furthest west (sometimes called Joshua's tomb) has a porch in front of it eleven feet high, twenty-four feet long, ten feet ten inches broad. In front of this were two pilasters and two piers of rock about two feet square. The piers and pilasters are rudely cut, and not square ; they have capitals with a very simple moulding. The façade inside the tomb is remarkable for the number of niches for lamps, arranged in rows, but not symmetrically. There are over two hundred of these niches, and they are all blackened with smoke. The inner chamber is entered by a small square doorway about two feet two inches broad. The chamber within is thirteen feet nine inches to the back, and thirteen feet six inches broad. A bench or mastabah runs round the side and back walls. The height from the bench to the roof is six feet. There are fifteen *kokim* [tunnels, recesses], five on each wall, about six feet nine inches long, and about two feet broad. They are not parallel, but pointed outwards like a fan. They are rudely cut, but have arched roofs, and are recessed to hold a square slab in front. The *koka* is two feet nine inches high,

¹ Guérin, "Samarie," ii. 90. f. ; "Bibliothe. Sacra," 1843.

² "Memoirs," ii. 375. The account is interesting as giving a good description of Jewish sepulchres.

the slab recess three feet. The middle *koka* at the back is converted into a passage leading to an inner and thus probably more recent chamber, in which was found a sort of candelabrum, with three branches in yellow metal and very heavy. It is a magnificent tomb, evidently designed for some prince in Israel. The presence of the niches, not only in the chambers, but also in the vestibule open to the daylight, proves that it was held in the highest reverence. The tomb is of the greatest antiquity: the pilasters have no other ornamentation than a simple moulding.” It was in this sepulchre, as already mentioned, that a large number of flint knives was found. Close by, too, is a great oak-tree some forty feet high, called to this day Sheikh et Teim (“The chief servant of God”), and about three miles to the east is a village named Kefr Ishua (Joshua’s village). Of the rival site we have the following account: “Kefr Haris is an ordinary village on a hill among olive groves. It has on the east of it two sacred places resembling the other Mukams of the country, inclusive of Joseph’s tomb. One of these has the curious name Neby Kifl (‘Prophet of the division by lot’), who is called now ‘Companion of the Prophet.’ The other is now named Neby Kulda or Kunda, possibly a corruption of Caleb. May we not under the title Kifl recognize Joshua, who divided the inheritance among the children of Israel? It seems by far the most probable that the place to which Jew and Samaritan both point would be the true site, for it is most striking to find Jews visiting and venerating a place in the country of Samaria; yet in Samaria the tombs of Joseph, Eleazar, Phinehas, Ithamar, and Abishua are still shown; and if we follow the *indigenous* rather than the *foreign* tradition, it is here that we should place the tomb of Joshua also.”

The record, which has guided us to the final scene of all, closes with the statement that Eleazar, the high priest, died and was buried in a hill that pertained to his son Phinehas in the territory of Ephraim. Tradition, which in this case seems well grounded, places the tomb of Eleazar at Awertah, a village on the slopes east of the Plain of Shechem. The monument is described as a rude erection of masonry and plaster, eighteen feet long by fifteen broad, standing in a paved court, in which grows a magnificent terebinth.²

¹ “Memoirs,” ii. 378.

² Ibid. ii. 219, 288; “Spec. Pap.” 228.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHARACTER AND WORK.

Character of Joshua ; his faith, generalship, unselfishness—The Book of Joshua ; its age, origin, place in Canon—Miracles—Typical character of Joshua and his work.

OUR task is almost ended. It remains only to add a few remarks concerning the character of Joshua, the work which he accomplished, the Book which is called after him, and the typical nature which universal consent has assigned to his name, his attributes, and his acts. The sketch required is almost ready made to our hand. A man without affectation or unreality, simple, steadfast, religious, is easily understood, needs no recondite analysis.

From the preceding history we gain a very complete picture of Joshua's own character and of the work which he accomplished. Throughout he is the fearless soldier, the straightforward leader, the simple, unquestioning executor of the Divine will ; and his work is the settling of Israel in the Promised Land, and the assigning to the tribes their separate possessions in such a way as to preclude jealousy and dispute. That this could not be effected without much suffering and bloodshed is obvious ; and Joshua, as the agent of this wholesale extermination, has been called cruel and pitiless, and the command which he obeyed has been deemed immoral and utterly contradictory to the attributes of God. To such objections sufficient answer has already been given, and no more need here be said. But as bearing on the character of Joshua, we may remark that the execution of this Divine vengeance on the sinful Canaanites did not brutalize him or his soldiers. He and they felt that they were simply instruments in inflicting a righteous punish-

ment ; and they carried out the sanguinary sentence, not as relishing the terrible performance, but simply as acting in obedience to an acknowledged duty. But before this result could be obtained, what stupendous difficulties had been met and overcome ! What consummate abilities Joshua had displayed ! He had all the qualities of a great general, rapid decision, unshrinking firmness, thorough knowledge of the materials at his command, masterly estimate of every varying situation, and the power of winning the love and confidence of his soldiers.

It was no light task to convert a mob of broken-spirited, down-trodden slaves into an orderly army. In Egypt the Israelites had seen nothing of war, had had no chance of military experience ; they had to be inspired, animated, and encouraged, as well as disciplined and organized. Hence the constant injunction laid on Joshua was to be bold and of a good courage, that his example might lead the people to display confidence and fortitude in the face of difficulty and peril. It was not owing to any natural timidity in his disposition that this exhortation was so often repeated ; never did his animal or moral courage fail ; throughout his career no trace of pusillanimity is ever found. The bravest of men might well have had some misgiving as to the success of the enterprise which he had to undertake, might well have shrunk from attempting so great a labour with such inefficient instruments. And the encouraging exhortation, combined with the assurance of Divine leading and support, kept him true to his single aim, and enabled him to inspire others with the confidence which was his very life. In nothing is Joshua's character more conspicuous than in his simple trust in the supernatural guidance of his mission. God had ordained that certain operations should be undertaken, and that certain things should be effected ; the Leader, using the means at his command, and asking the counsel of the priest, felt no hesitation as to the result, knew that success would be sure to follow. This childlike faith is a very beautiful trait, and led to great results. It enhanced his natural courage and sanctified it to noble issues ; it enabled him to endure under most adverse circumstances, and to stand unmoved in most perilous ventures.

Joshua is the very Bayard of Scripture heroes, the man without fear and without reproach, one of whom no disparaging

remark is ever made, one whose meat it was to do the will of God. Modest and retiring, he never put himself forward, but from early years his merits had been known to Moses, and he was immediately selected to lead the army at the first approach of an enemy. At the awful interview on Sinai his courage, faith, and purity pointed him out as suitable attendant to him with whom God talked face to face. Who more fit than he to reconnoitre the Land of Promise to which his longings turned, when he alone, with one other, brought back a report such as a warrior and a statesman and a faithful Israelite should give, and when undaunted he opposed the angered congregation with calm consistency? Chosen especially to succeed the great Lawgiver whose one lapse debarred him from the country of his heart's desire, Joshua, "full of the spirit of wisdom," carried out the Divine purpose with an energy and skill which marked the saint, the patriot, and the strategist. The invasion of Canaan was conducted with prudence and science, in a very different fashion from the rash and ill-advised attempt made on the south frontier some forty years previously. By Joshua's skilful tactics the strong positions of the lower part of Canaan were taken in reverse and rendered practically useless ; with a basis of operations secured, he effectually separated the two divisions of Canaan, and acting with all his forces on isolated districts, speedily subjected one half of the country already demoralized by Egyptian raids, and unable to combine in any effectual opposition. The reduction of the north was effected by the celerity of movements which neutralized the effects of numerical superiority and better arms. In these operations we recognize the prompt and keen-sighted leader, the consummate general, the valiant soldier ; but we cannot fail also to acknowledge the faith in the unseen, the abiding consciousness of a high controlling hand, which inspired every enterprise and secured its success.

Joshua was a soldier, an ideal soldier, but he was something more ; he has other claims on our love and veneration. When his martial labours were accomplished, he sought no pre-eminence, he set up no military despotism, he shrank from unnecessary responsibility, he was content to share his authority with others. In the distribution of the conquered land he acted in subordination to the high priest and in concert with the elders of the tribes. He sought not to found a family ; he was

the last to receive an inheritance ; with a rare unselfishness he took for his own possession a spot, little regarded, rugged, unfruitful. There was no self-assertion, no pride, no presumption ; his victories were referred to God as the giver ; for them he claimed no reward and no thanks at the hands of his countrymen. When he is jealous it is for the honour of God or his master Moses, never for himself. Inflexibly just, he exacts the full penalty from the miserable Ach  n, yet, tender even in his severity, he calls him "son." He is faithful to the crafty Gibeonites ; he is never partial, never imperious ; gentle and strong, firm and loving, conscious of power, yet, clothed with humility, he is the most perfect representative of the religious leader, the theocratic general, the guileless Israelite.

Of his literary abilities we have no certain criteria on which to form an opinion. We know that Moses entrusted to his care the record of certain important transactions, and that he himself preserved the memorials of some proceedings in which he bore the chief part. But the book which bears the name of Joshua is not so called because he was its author, but because it is wholly occupied with the record of his acts and sayings. It is true that in the last chapter we find the sentence : "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God," and some have thought that it applies to the whole of the preceding work, comparing it with some other statements of a similar nature, *e.g.* : "Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel" (Deut. xxxi. 9). "The Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua" (Exod. xvii. 14). "Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in the book, and laid it up before the Lord" (1 Sam. x. 25). But these expressions seem to indicate that these histories are a continuation of that of Moses, and that the words apply simply to the passages to which they are appended. This is certainly true of the verse quoted above from Joshua, which states merely that Joshua committed to writing the account of the renewal of the covenant, and inserted it in the Book of the Law which he had received from Moses. Primitive and Jewish tradition alike claim the authorship of this book for Joshua, except, of course, the few verses which record his death and burial. Modern criticism is generally opposed to this view, or holds it only partially, but

certainly cannot agree as to the possible author, the suggested writers ranging from Eleazar and Phinehas or one of the elders that outlived Joshua unto one of the returned Babylonish captives. Neologian critics find evidence of the work of many different writers in the book, and with much ingenuity apportion paragraphs, verses, and expressions to some four or five authors. On investigation it appears that no two of these scholars agree in their distribution of the parts, otherwise old-fashioned orthodox opinion might be overwhelmed with an accumulation of evidence which it could ill resist. As it is, we may allow that our book is a compilation, edited by one who lived very near the time of the events narrated, and was fully acquainted with the geography of the country which he describes. Nothing in the language of the work militates against this idea. The best Hebraists allow that the style stamps it as of a high antiquity quite according with its supposed date. Then the exactitude of the details, the careful report of speeches, the revelations made to Joshua, the enumeration of kings and cities, the precise account of the distribution of territory, point to an eye-witness and contemporary. And although there are passages and allusions which denote a writer subsequent to Joshua (as, for instance, the notice of his death, and the remark that "the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day," chap. xv. 63), yet for the above considerations it seems natural to conclude that the bulk of the work was composed under the direction of Joshua, and from records supplied by him, supplemented after his decease by some details added by one of his successors. That it was compiled before the age of David is confirmed by much internal evidence. There is an entire absence of allusion to the condition of Israel in later days. There is no token of the reign of kings, or of the division of the country into rival kingdoms, throughout the book. The oppression under the Canaanites is unknown to the writer, otherwise he could not have spoken of the tributary position of the inhabitants of Gezer (chap. xvi. 10). The statement already mentioned that the Jebusites dwelt with the Judahites at Jerusalem could only have been made before David took the citadel; the league with the Gibeonites had not been broken by Saul when our book was written; nor was the temple erected.* In David's days the Sidonians would not have been

* Josh. ix. 27.

spoken of as doomed to extermination ; nor would Sidon have been called "great," had Tyre, as later it was, then been the capital of Phœnicia.¹ The dependence of Joshua upon the Pentateuch and the legislation of Moses is obvious. Unless, then, we accede to the unproved hypothesis of a post-exilian date for the Pentateuch, we are constrained to admit the correctness of the position assigned to our book in the Jewish canon. In this arrangement, as every one knows, the Testament was divided into three sections, called respectively the Law, the Prophets, and the other writings or Hagiographa. Joshua was placed at the beginning of the second section, and was ranked with the "earlier prophets," which included the Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Had it been composed in the time of Ezra, as some critics conjecture, it would surely have been placed with the Chronicles in the third section of the Scriptures. Its present situation is most appropriate, linking, as it does, what precedes and what follows, showing how Jehovah fulfilled His promises to the patriarchs, and displayed His grace, power, and mercy to His chosen people. It is not a mélange composed of incongruous elements, but a systematic work with a definite object from which the author never swerves. Following closely the course of events, he seems at times to have sacrificed the logical to the chronological sequence, and to have left unexplained some matters which needed further elucidation ; but this is simply an evidence of a contemporary writer, who recognized no necessity for adding illustrative matter, and who purposed to assume the part of a simple annalist, not that of a philosophical historian. The claims of the book to a place in the canon of Scripture have never been seriously disputed ; allusions in other parts of the Bible confirm its general acceptance. In the Psalms reference is made not only to the Exodus, but also to the events which succeeded, when Jordan was driven back, and the heathen were expelled by the hand of the Lord, and the tribes received their inheritance.² The prophets adumbrate the victory at Gibeon, and the indignation poured forth on the heathen.³ And in the New Testament St. Stephen speaks of the uprooting of the Canaanites and the introduction of the ark, St James applauds the deed of Rahab the harlot, and the writer of the Epistle

¹ Josh. xii. 8 ; xiii. 4-6.

² Isa. xxviii. 21 ; Hab. iii. 12.

³ Pss. xliv. ; lxviii. ; lxxviii.

to the Hebrews, together with the mention of this woman, speaks of the fall of Jericho and of "the rest" which Joshua gave to the people.¹

The miraculous element in the book has no difficulty for the Christian believer. He who believes in the stupendous miracle of the Incarnation, God assuming man's nature, is satisfied that God interferes in man's concerns, and is not staggered by any display of omnipotence in the furtherance of immeasurable designs. Once admit the antecedent probability of miracles and the credibility of the history in which they are recounted, the details and extent of the wonder are comparatively unimportant. At the same time, it is sometimes possible to determine the secondary causes of miracles detailed, and it is always advisable carefully to scrutinize the reports of them, that the faith of weaker brethren may not have laid upon them a burden greater than they are able to bear. One is led naturally to expect Divine interpositions at this crisis of the world's history ; they do not stand alone ; they are the sequel of the providential events which happened in Egypt and the wilderness ; they all tended to further the plan for the preservation of the pure worship of God, and to prepare the way for the Gospel. If Israel, the chosen depository of God's law and will, was to conquer and retain Canaan, it could only do so by the special assistance of heavenly powers ; and it would be a matter of surprise if some record of these interferences had not existed. The antecedent expectation of miraculous occurrences is fulfilled by the simple statements in our book. It was necessary to demonstrate to the heathen that Jehovah was the one Lord of heaven and earth, and that the Israelites were His special care ; it was necessary that the latter should recognize these great truths ; for both these purposes miracles were requisite ; attestation was to be obtained by certain occurrences transcending the customary operations of nature, which must be acknowledged to be providential. The revelations of God in these early times introduced marvellous changes in the moral and spiritual world ; is it altogether strange and inconceivable that such novelties should be accompanied and confirmed by signs and portents in the world of matter ? A primitive age takes delight in the marvellous, and is largely influenced by an appeal to the senses ; faith in the Unseen is of

¹ Acts vii. 45 ; James ii. 25 ; Heb. iv. 8 ; xi. 30 ff.

slow growth, and needs external support. And God descends to man's infirmity and dulness of apprehension by affording palpable evidence of His intervention, and giving extraordinary aids to feeble belief. If we put any trust in the statements of Scripture, miraculous interferences have marked all God's dealings with His chosen people under the Law and under the Gospel alike. However they are to be explained, or whether for their explanation we must be content to wait, they are bound up indissolubly with the history. The same evidence attests both. We may say that the observers were mistaken in their estimation of the wonder, but there can be no reasonable doubt that the circumstances which led to, and which followed the occurrence, and the contemporary opinion which saw therein a miraculous intervention, are truthfully recorded. If we reject the miracle, we must do so on other grounds than that of insufficient testimony, or we must consider the whole history fabulous.

This sketch would not be complete without some brief notice of the typical character of Joshua and his work. Holy Scripture itself suggests such treatment,¹ and the subject has exercised many pens, notably that of Bishop Pearson in his *Exposition of the Creed*, an epitome of whose argument may be found in many English commentaries. Many commentators see also in the history contained in the Book of Joshua an allegory of the life of individual Christians, and the struggles and fortunes of the Christian Church. We must be content to indicate without developing this view. On Joshua as a type thus much may be here said. The mystery begins with the very name of Joshua, first called Hoshea, "Salvation," and then Jehoshua, or Joshua, "God's Salvation," or "Jehovah the Saviour." In the Septuagint he is called Jesus, and this name is reproduced in the Acts (vii. 45) and in the Epistle to the Hebrews (iii. 8). The appellation was confirmed by his acts; as the Son of Sirach says:² "According to his name he was made great for the saving of the elect of God." He by the help of the Lord led his people into the promised land, preserved them from innumerable dangers, gave them victory over their enemies, put them in possession of their inheritance. Jesus was He who was to save His people from their sins, and to bring them into the heavenly Canaan, preparing eternal mansions for them; He was to

¹ *Acts* vii. 45; *Heb.* iv. 8.

² *Ecclus.* xlvi. 4.

destroy the works of the devil, to overcome the world, and to reward those who have faithfully warred under his banner. What Moses could not do, Joshua effected. Moses and Aaron brought the people out of Egypt, but left them in the wilderness, could not settle them in Canaan. This was reserved for Joshua. Thus was prefigured the imperfection of the Law which could not make its followers perfect, even as it is said : "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." ¹ Mosaic legislation separated the Israelites from the nations ; but Jesus brings the true Israel into close and peculiar relation with God. It was in obedience to the Law Joshua conquered Canaan ; so Christ came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. Joshua smote the Amalekites and subdued the Canaanites, thus opening the passage to the land and giving possession of it ; so Jesus goes before us as Prince and Saviour, subduing our spiritual enemies, and giving us possession of eternal life. The long wanderings of the desert were terminated by the rest in the land of promise ; so the only rest which the Christian knows is found under the leading of Jesus, under whom "there remaineth a rest for the people of God." Regarding this life as a pilgrimage, with its sojourn in Egypt, and the desert, and Canaan, we may look on the passage of the Jordan as the valley of death which opens the way to a better world. And if in these general matters the typical character of Joshua's work is plainly seen, it is no less wonderfully clear in its varied details. As he began his life in hardship and bondage in Egypt, sharing the lot of his brethren, so Jesus took upon Him the form of a servant, and suffered the privations of the poorest. Moses took Joshua with him up into the mount, for without Jesus, in whom "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," it is impossible to approach the presence of God or to look into the secrets of heaven. On the banks of the Jordan God began to "magnify Joshua," and to point him out to Israel as their ordained leader ; at the same river Jesus began His office, and was anointed with the Holy Spirit, when the voice of the Father proclaimed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." As Joshua directed that from the bed of Jordan twelve stones should be taken and set up as a memorial of deliverance, so after His baptism Jesus chose twelve apostles as the foundation-stones of His Church.

¹ John i. 17.

The command of circumcision was given not to Moses, but to his successor—an intimation that Jesus is the true circumciser, the author of the circumcision of the heart, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh. The circumcision following immediately upon the passage of the Jordan may signify the life of justification dependent on the resurrection of Christ. The saving of Rahab the harlot adumbrates the great saying of Jesus : “ Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” Joshua assigns the people their inheritance in the promised land, but warns them that they must maintain their possessions by watchfulness and valour ; Jesus brings His followers into the spiritual Canaan, the Church, but tells them that foes are left to try them, and bids them fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil. Under Moses there are murmurings, disputes, controversies, for “ the law made nothing perfect ; ” under Joshua all is harmony, confidence, triumph, for “ by one offering Jesus hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”¹ Lastly, before he died, Joshua gathered the heads of the nation around him, portrayed the nature of the work before them, and their high destiny if they remained faithful to Jehovah ; Jesus, before He left the earth, assembled the representatives of the true Israel, gave them their work, showed them the source of their strength, saying : “ Go ye and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

¹ Heb. vii. 19 ; x. 14 ; “ Pulp. Comment.”

